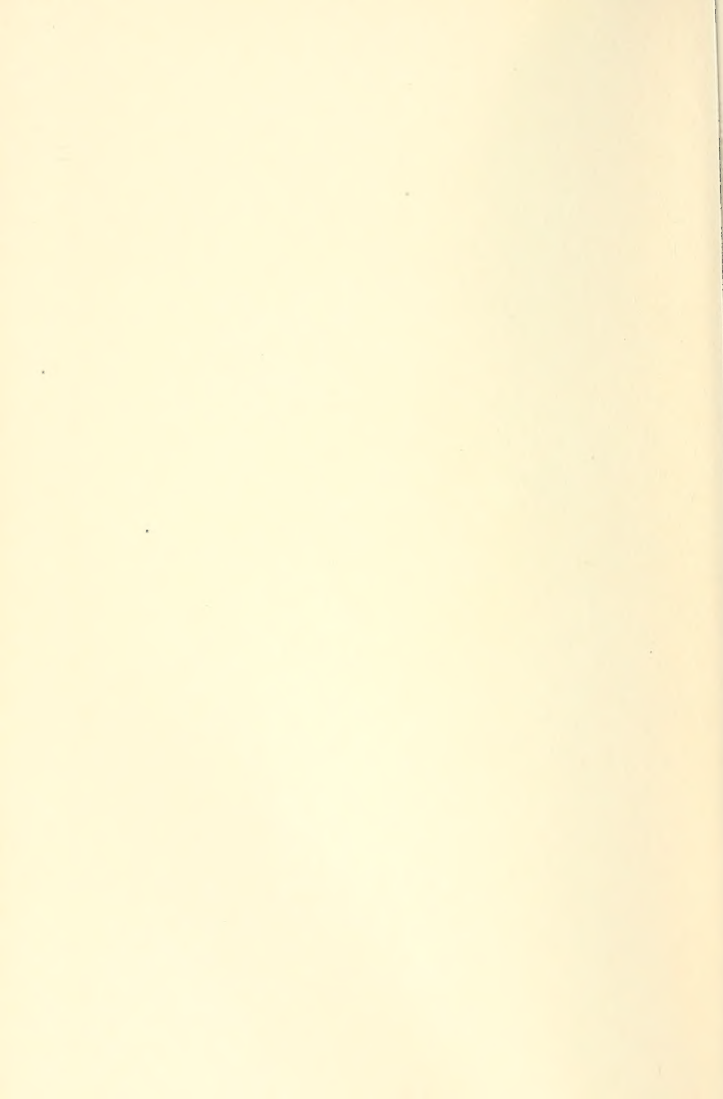
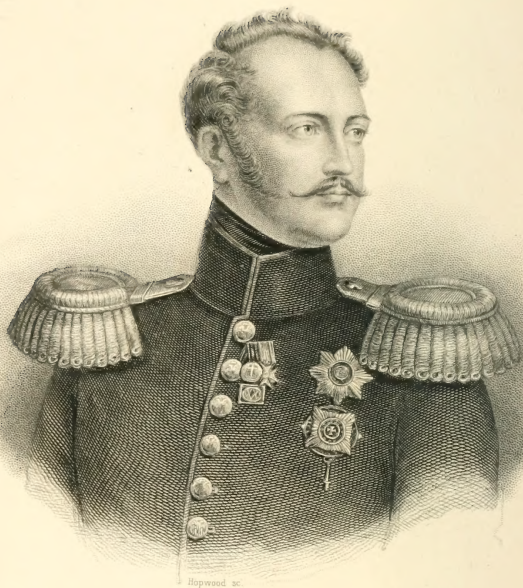




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Illustrated Library Edition

FATHER SERGIUS
THE FORGED COUPON
MISCELLANEOUS
STORIES

Portrait of Tsar Nicholas I
Engraved on steel by Hopwood

Edited by THE HARTFORD WRIGHT



BOSTON

COLONIAL PRESS COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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FATHER SERGIUS
—
THE FORGED COUPON
—
MISCELLANEOUS
STORIES

By
LEV N. TOLSTÓY

Edited by DR. HAGBERG WRIGHT



BOSTON

COLONIAL PRESS COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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FATHER SERGIUS

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FATHER SERGIUS

FATHER SERGIUS

I

THERE happened in St. Petersburg during the forties an event which startled society.

A handsome youth, a prince, an officer in the Cuirassiers for whom every one had predicted the rank of aide-de-camp and a brilliant career attached to the person of Emperor Nicholas I., quitted the service. He broke with his beautiful *fiancée*, a lady-in-waiting, and a favourite of the empress, just a fortnight before the wedding-day, and giving his small estate to his sister, retired to a monastery to become a monk.

To those who were ignorant of the hidden motives, this was an extraordinary and unaccountable step; but as regards Prince Stephen Kasatsky himself, it was such a natural move that he could not conceive an alternative.

His father, a retired colonel of the Guards, died when the son was twelve. Although it was hard for his mother to let him go from her, she would not act in defiance of the wishes of her late

husband, who had expressed the desire that in the event of his death the boy should be sent away and educated as a cadet. So she secured his admission to the corps.

The widow herself with her daughter Varvara moved to St. Petersburg in order to be in the same town with the boy and to take him home for his holidays. He showed brilliant capacity and extraordinary ambition, and came out first in military drill, in riding, and in his studies,—mathematics especially — for which he had a particular liking.

In spite of his abnormal height he was a handsome, graceful lad, and had it not been for his violent temper he would have been an altogether exemplary cadet. He never drank or indulged in any sort of dissipation, and he was particularly truthful. The fits of fury which maddened him from time to time, when he lost all control over himself and raged like a wild animal, were the only faults in his character. Once, when a cadet ragged him because of his collection of minerals, he almost threw the boy out of the window. On another occasion he rushed at an officer and struck him, it was said, for having broken his word and told a direct lie.

For this he would surely have been degraded to the rank of a common soldier, if it had not

been for the head of the school, who hushed up the matter and dismissed the officer.

At eighteen Kasatsky left with the rank of lieutenant and entered an aristocratic Guard regiment. The Emperor Nicholas had known him while he was in the cadet corps, and had shown him favour while in the regiment. It was on this account that people prophesied that he would become an aide-de-camp. Kasatsky desired it greatly, although less from ambition than from passionate love for the emperor whom he had cherished since his cadet days. Each time the emperor visited the school — and he visited it very often — as Kasatsky saw the tall figure, the broad chest, the aquiline nose above the moustache, and the close-cropped side whiskers, the military uniform, and the brisk, firm step, and heard him greeting the cadets in his strident voice, he experienced the momentary ecstasy of one who sees his well-beloved. But his passionate adoration of the emperor was even more intense. He desired to give up something, everything, even himself, to show his infinite devotion. The Emperor Nicholas knew that he inspired such admiration, and deliberately provoked it. He played with the cadets, made them surround him, and treated them sometimes with childish simplicity, sometimes as a friend, and then again with an air of solemn grandeur.

After the incident with the officer, the emperor, who did not allude to it, waved Kasatsky theatrically aside when the latter approached him. Then, when he was leaving, he frowned and shook his finger at the boy, saying, "Be assured that everything is known to me; but there are things I do not wish to know. Nevertheless they are *here*," and he pointed to his heart.

When the cadets were formally received by the emperor on leaving the school, he did not remind Kasatsky of his insubordination, but told them all, as was his custom, that they could turn to him in need, that they were to serve him and their country with loyalty, and that he would ever remain their best friend. All were touched — as usual — and Kasatsky, remembering the past, shed tears and made a vow to serve his beloved Tsar with all his might.

When Kasatsky entered the regiment, his mother and sister left St. Petersburg, going first to Moscow and then to their estate in the country. Kasatsky gave half his fortune to his sister. What remained was quite sufficient to support him in the expensive regiment which he had joined.

Viewed from outside, Kasatsky seemed like an ordinary brilliant young officer of the Guards making a career for himself. But within his soul there were intense and complex strivings.

Although this striving, which had been going on ever since his childhood, seemed to vary in its nature, it was essentially one and the same, and had for its object that absolute perfection in every undertaking which would give him the applause and admiration of the world. Whatever it might be, accomplishments or learning, he worked to merit praise, and to stand as an example to the rest. Mastering one subject he took up another, and so obtained first place in his studies. For example, while he was still in the corps, conscious of a lack of fluency in his French, he contrived to master the language so that he knew it like his own. Then again, when he became interested in chess while still in the corps, he worked at the game till he acquired proficiency.

Apart from the chief end of life, which was in his eyes the service of the Tsar and his country, he had always some self-appointed aim, and, however unimportant it might be, he pursued this with his whole soul, and lived for it until it was accomplished. But the moment it was attained another arose in its place. This passion for distinguishing himself and for pursuing one object in order to distinguish himself filled his life. So it was that after entering upon his career he set himself to acquire the utmost perfection in the knowledge of the service, and, except for his uncon-

trollable temper, which was sometimes the occasion of actions that were inimical to his success, he soon became a model officer.

Once, during a conversation in society, he realised the need of a more general education. So setting himself to work to read books, he soon attained what he desired. Then he wanted to hold a brilliant position in aristocratic society. He learned to dance beautifully, and was presently invited to all the balls and parties in the best circles. But he was not satisfied with this. He was accustomed to being first in everything, and in this instance he was very far from that. Society at that time consisted, as I suppose it has done in every time and place, of four kinds of people — rich people who are received at court; people who are not rich, but are born and brought up in court circles; rich people who ape the court; and people, neither rich nor of the court, who copy both.

Kasatsky did not belong to the first two, but was gladly received in the last two sets. On entering society his first idea was that he must have a *liaison* with a society lady; and quite unexpectedly it soon came about. Presently, however, he realised that the circle in which he moved was not the most exclusive, and that there were higher spheres, and that, notwithstanding he was received there, he was a stranger in their midst.

They were polite to him, but their manner made it plain that they had their own intimates, and that he was not one of them. Kasatsky longed to be one of them. To attain this end he must become an aide-de-camp — which he expected to be — or else he must marry into the set. He resolved upon this latter course. His choice fell upon a young girl, a beauty, belonging to the court, and not merely belonging to the circle he wished to move in, whose society was coveted by the most distinguished and the most firmly rooted in this circle. This was the Countess Korotkova. Kasatsky began to pay court to her purely for the sake of his career; she was uncommonly attractive, and he very soon fell in love with her. She was noticeably cool towards him at first, and then suddenly everything changed. She treated him graciously, and her mother continually invited him to the house.

Kasatsky proposed, and was accepted. He was rather astonished at the facility with which he gained his happiness, and he noticed something strange in the behaviour towards him of both mother and daughter. He was deeply in love, and love had made him blind, so he failed to realise what nearly the whole town knew — that the previous year his *fiancée* had been the favourite of the Emperor Nicholas.

Two weeks before the day arranged for the wedding Kasatsky was at Tsarskoye Selo, at the country place of his *fiancée*. It was a hot day in May. The lovers had had a walk in the garden, and were sitting on a bench in the shade of the lindens. Mary looked exceedingly pretty in her white muslin dress. She seemed the personification of love and innocence — now bending her head, now gazing at her handsome young lover, who was talking to her with great tenderness and self-restraint, as though he feared by look or gesture to offend her angelic purity. Kasatsky belonged to those men of the 'forties, who do not exist nowadays, who deliberately, while condoning impurity in themselves, require in their wives the most ideal and seraphic innocence. Being prepared to find this purity in every girl of their set, they behaved accordingly. This theory, in so far as it concerned the laxity which the men permitted themselves, was certainly altogether wrong and harmful; but in its relation to the women I think, compared with the notion of the modern young man who sees in every girl nothing but a mate or a female, there was much to be said for it. The girls, perceiving such adoration, endeavoured with more or less success to be goddesses.

Kasatsky held the views of his time, and looked

with such eyes upon his sweetheart. That day he was more in love than ever, but there was nothing sensual in his feelings towards his *fiancée*. On the contrary he regarded her with the tender adoration of something unattainable. He rose and stood at his full height before her, leaning with both hands on his sabre.

"Now for the first time I know what happiness is. And it is you — darling — who have given me that happiness," he said, smiling shyly.

He was still at that stage where endearments are not yet a habit, and it made him gasp to think of using them to such an angel.

"It is you who have made me see myself clearly. You have shown me that I am better than I thought," he added.

"I knew it long ago. That is what made me begin to love you."

The nightingales were beginning their song somewhere near, and the young leaves moved in the sudden gusts of wind. He raised her hand to his lips and there were tears in his eyes.

She understood that he was thanking her for having said that she loved him. He took a few steps backwards and forwards, remaining silent, then approached her again, and sat beside her.

"You know, when I began to make love to you, it was not disinterested on my part. I

wanted to get into society. And then, when I came to know you better, how little all that mattered, compared to you! Are you angry with me for that?"

She did not answer, but touched his hand. He understood that it meant "I am not angry."

"Well, you said—" he stopped. It seemed too bold to say what he intended. "You said—that you—began to love me—forgive me—I quite believe it—but there is something that troubles you and stands in the way of your feelings. What is it?"

"Yes—now or never," she thought. "He will know it anyhow. But now he will not forsake me because of it. Oh, if he should, how dreadful!" And she gazed with deep affection upon that tall, noble, powerful figure. She loved him now more than the Tsar, and were it not for Nicholas being an emperor, her choice between them would rest on Kasatsky.

"Listen," she said, "I cannot deceive you. I must tell you everything. You asked me what stood in the way. It is that I have loved before."

She again laid her hand on his with an imploring gesture.

He was silent.

"Do you want to know who it was? The emperor."

"We all loved him. I can imagine you, a school-girl in the institute —"

"No. After that. It was only a passing infatuation, but I must tell you —"

"Well — what?"

"No; it was not simply —" She covered her face with her hands.

"What! You gave yourself to him?"

She was silent.

"His mistress?"

Still she did not answer.

He sprang to his feet, and pale as death, with his teeth chattering, stood before her. He now remembered how the emperor, meeting him on the Nevsky, had congratulated him.

"Oh, my God, what have I done! Stephen!"

"Don't touch me — don't touch me! Oh, how terrible!"

He turned and went to the house.

There he met her mother.

"What's the matter with you, prince?" she stopped, seeing his face. The blood rushed suddenly to his head.

"You knew it! And you wanted me to shield them! Oh, if you weren't a woman —" he

shouted, raising his large fist. Then he turned and ran away.

Had the lover of his *fiancée* been a private individual he would have killed him. But it was his beloved Tsar.

The next day he asked for furlough, and then for his discharge. Feigning illness, he refused to see any one, and went away to the country.

There he spent the summer putting his affairs in order. When summer was over he did not return to St. Petersburg, but entered a monastery with the intention of becoming a monk.

His mother wrote to dissuade him from this momentous step. He answered that he felt a vocation for God which was above all other considerations. It was only his sister, who was as proud and ambitious as himself, who understood him.

She was quite right in her estimate of his motives. His becoming a monk was only to show his contempt for all that seemed most important to the rest of the world, and had seemed so to himself while he was still an officer. He climbed to a pinnacle from which he could look down on those he had previously envied. However, contrary to his sister's opinion, this was not the only guiding motive. Mingled with his pride and his passion for ascendancy, there was also a genuine

religious sentiment which Varvara did not know he possessed. His sense of injury and his disappointment in Mary, whom he had thought such an angel, were so poignant that they led him to despair. His despair led where? To God, to faith, to a childish faith which had never been destroyed.

II

ON the feast of the Intercession of the Virgin, Kasatsky entered the monastery to show his superiority over all those who fancied themselves above him.

The abbot was a nobleman by birth, a learned man, and a writer. He belonged to that monastic order which hails from Walachia, the members of which choose, and in their turn are chosen, leaders to be followed unswervingly and implicitly obeyed.

This abbot was the disciple of the famous Ambrosius, disciple of Makardix of the Leonidas, disciple of Païssy Velichkovsky.

To this abbot Kasatsky submitted himself as to the superior of his choice.

Beside the feeling of ascendancy over others, which Kasatsky felt in the monastery as he had felt it in the world, he found here the joy of attaining perfection in the highest degree inwardly as well as outwardly. As in the regiment, he had rejoiced in being more than an irreproachable officer, even exceeding his duties; so as a monk his endeavour was to be perfect, industrious, ab-



Russian Pope.

stemious, meek, and humble: and, above all, pure, not only in deed but in thought; and obedient. This last quality made his life there far easier. In that much-frequented monastery there were many conditions objectionable to him, but through obedience he became reconciled to them all.

“It is not for me to reason. I have but to obey, whatever the command.” On guard before the sacred relics, singing in the choir, or adding up accounts in the hostelry, all possibility of doubt was silenced by obedience to his superior. Had it not been for that, the monotony and length of the church service, the intrusion of visitors and the inferiority of the other monks, would have been extremely distasteful to him. But as it was he bore it all perfectly and found it even a solace and a support.

“I don’t know,” he thought, “why I ought to hear the same prayers many times a day, but I know that it is necessary, and knowing this I rejoice.” His superior had told him that as food is necessary for the life of the body, so is spiritual food, such as prayers in church, necessary for maintaining the life of the spirit. He believed it, and though he found the service for which he had to rise at a very early hour a difficulty, it brought him indubitable comfort and joy.

This was the result of humility and the certainty that anything done in obedience to the superior was right.

The aim of his life was neither the gradual attainment of utter subjugation of his will, nor the attainment of greater and greater humility; but the achievement of all those Christian virtues which seemed in the beginning so easy of possession.

Being not in the least half hearted, he gave what fortune remained to him to the monastery without regret.

Humility before his inferiors, far from being difficult, was a delight to him. Even the victory over the sins of greed and lust were easy for him. The superior had especially warned him against this latter sin, but Kasatsky was glad to feel immunity from it. He was only tortured by the thought of his *fiancée*. It was not only the thought of what had been; but the vivid picture of what might have been. He could not resist recalling to himself the image of the famous mistress of the emperor who afterwards married and became a good wife and mother. Her husband had a high position, influence, and esteem, and a good and penitent wife.

In his better hours Kasatsky was not distressed by this thought. At such times he rejoiced that

these temptations were past. But there were moments when all that went to make up his present life grew dark before his mind; moments when, if he did not actually cease to believe in the foundation of his present life, he was at least unable to perceive it; when he could not discover the object of his present life; when he was overcome with recollections of the past, and terrible to say, with regret at having abandoned the world. His only salvation in that state of mind was obedience and work, and prayers the whole day long. He went through his usual forms at prayers, he even prayed more than was his wont, but it was lip-service, and his soul took no part. This condition would sometimes last a day or two days, and would then pass away. But these days were hideous. Kasatsky felt that he was neither in his own hands nor God's, but subject to some outside will. All he could do at those times was to follow the advice of his superior and undertake nothing, but simply wait.

On the whole, Kasatsky lived then, not according to his own will but in complete obedience to his superior; and in that obedience he found peace.

Such was Kasatsky's life in his first monastery, which lasted seven years. At the end of the third year he was ordained to the priesthood and

was given the name of Sergius. The ordination was a momentous event in his inner life. He had previously experienced great comfort and spiritual uplifting at holy communions. At first, when he was himself celebrating mass, at the moment of the oblation, his soul was filled with exaltation. But gradually this sense became dulled; and when on one occasion he had to celebrate mass in an hour of depression as he sometimes had, he felt that this exaltation could not endure. The emotion eventually paled until only the habit was left.

On the whole, in the seven years of his life in the monastery, Sergius began to grow weary. All that he had to learn, all that he had to attain was done, and he had nothing more to do.

But his stupefaction only increased. During that time he heard of his mother's death and of Mary's marriage. Both events were matters of indifference to him, as all his attention and all his interest were concentrated on his inner life.

In the fourth year of his monastic experience, during which the bishop had shown him marked kindness, his superior told him that in the event of high honours being offered to him he should not decline. Just then monastic ambition, precisely that quality which was so disgusting to him in all the other monks, arose within him. He was sent to a monastery close to the capital. He

would have been glad to refuse, but his superior ordered him to accept, so he obeyed, and taking leave of his superior, left for the other monastery.

This transfer to the monastery near the metropolis was an important event in Sergius's life. There he encountered many temptations, and his whole will power was concentrated on the struggle they entailed. In the first monastery women were no trial to him, but in the second instance this special temptation assumed grave dimensions and even took definite shape.

There was a lady known for her frivolous behaviour, who began to seek his favour. She talked to him and asked him to call upon her. Sergius refused with severity, but was horrified at the definiteness of his desire. He was so alarmed that he wrote to his superior. Moreover, for the sake of humiliation, he called a young novice and, conquering his shame, confessed his weakness. He begged him to keep an eye on him and not let him go anywhere but to service and to do penance.

Besides that, Sergius suffered severely on account of his great antipathy to the abbot of this monastery, a worldly man and clever in worldly ways who was making a career for himself within the church. In spite of his most earnest endeavours, Sergius could not overcome his dislike

for him. He was submissive to him, but in his heart he criticised him unceasingly. At last, when he had been there nearly two years, his real sentiments burst forth.

On the feast of the Intercession of the Virgin, the vesper service was being celebrated in the church proper. There were many visitors from the neighbourhood, and the service was conducted by the abbot himself. Father Sergius was standing in his usual place, and was praying; that is to say, he was engaged in that inner combat which always occupied him during service, especially in this second monastery.

The conflict was caused by his irritation at the presence of all the fine folk and especially the ladies. He tried not to notice what was going on around him. He could not help, however, seeing a soldier who while conducting the better dressed people pushed the common crowd aside, and noticing the ladies who pointed out the monks, often himself and another monk as well, who was noted for his good looks. He tried to concentrate his mind, to see nothing but the light of the candles on the ikonostasis, the sacred images, and the priests. He tried to hear nothing but the prayers which were spoken and chanted; to feel nothing but self-oblivion in the fulfilment of his duty. This was a feeling he always ex-

perienced when he listened to prayers and anticipated the word in the prayers he had so often heard.

So he stood, crossing himself, prostrating himself, struggling with himself, now indulging in quiet condemnation, and now giving himself up to that obliteration of thought and feeling which he voluntarily induced in himself.

When the treasurer, Father Nicodemus (also a great stumbling-block in Father Sergius's way — that Father Nicodemus!), whom he couldn't help censuring for flattering and fawning on the abbot, approached him, and saluting him with a low bow that nearly bent him in two, said that the abbot requested his presence behind the holy gates, Father Sergius straightened his cassock, covered his head, and went circumspectly through the crowd.

"*Lise, regardes á droite — c'est lui,*" he heard a woman's voice say.

"*Où, où? Il n'est pas tellement beau!*"

He knew they were referring to him. As his habit was when he was tempted, he repeated, "Lead us not into temptation." Dropping his eyes and bowing his head, he walked past the lectern and the canons, who at that moment were passing in front of the ikonostasis; and went behind the holy gates by the north portal. Ac-

according to custom, he crossed himself, bending double before the ikon. Then he raised his head and looked at the abbot, whom, together with some one standing beside him in brilliant array, he had already seen out of the corner of his eye.

The abbot stood against the wall in his vestments, taking his short fat hands from beneath his chasuble and folding them on his fat stomach. Fingering the braid on his chasuble, he smiled as he talked to a man wearing the uniform of a general in the emperor's suite, with insignia and epaulettes, which Father Sergius at once recognised with his experienced military eye. This general was a former colonel in command of his regiment, who now evidently held a very high position. Father Sergius at once noticed that the abbot was fully aware of this, and was so pleased that his fat red face and his bald head gleamed with satisfaction. Father Sergius was grieved and disgusted, and all the more so when he heard from the abbot that he had only sent for him to satisfy the curiosity of the general, who wanted to see his famous "colleague," as he put it.

"I am so glad to see you in your angelic guise," said the general, holding out his hand. "I hope you have not forgotten your old comrade."

The whole thing — the abbot's red and smiling face above his white beard in evident approval of

the general's words; the well-scrubbed face of the general with his self-satisfied smile, the smell of wine from the general's breath, and the smell of cigars from his whiskers — made Sergius boil.

He bowed once more before the abbot, and said, "Your grace deigned to call me—" and he stopped, asking by the very expression of his face and eyes, "What for?"

The abbot said, "Yes, to meet the general."

"Your grace, I left the world to save myself from temptation," he said, pale and with quivering lips; "why, then, do you expose me to it during prayers in the house of God?"

"Go! go!" said the abbot, frowning and growing angry.

Next day Father Sergius asked forgiveness of the abbot and of the brethren for his pride. But at the same time, after a night spent in prayer, he decided that his only possible course was to leave this monastery; so he wrote a letter to his superior imploring him to grant him leave to return to his monastery. He wrote that he felt his weakness and the impossibility of struggling alone against temptation without his help. He did penance for his sin of pride. The next post brought him a letter from the superior, who wrote that the sole cause of all his trouble was pride.

The old man explained to him that his fits of anger were due to the fact that in refusing all clerical honour he humiliated himself not for the sake of God, but for the sake of his pride; merely for the sake of saying to himself: "Now, am I not a splendid fellow not to desire anything?" That was why he could not tolerate the abbot's action. "I have renounced everything for the glory of God, and here I am exhibited like a wild beast!" "If you would just give up vanity for God's glory you would be able to bear it," wrote the old man; "worldly pride is not yet dead in you. I have thought often of you, Sergius, my son. I have prayed also, and this is God's message with regard to you: Go on as you are, and submit."

At that moment tidings came that the recluse Hilary, a man of saintly life, had died in the hermitage. He had lived there for eighteen years. The abbot of that hermitage inquired whether there was not a brother who would take his place.

"Now with regard to that letter of yours," wrote the superior, "go to Father Païssy, of the T—— Monastery. I have written to him about you, and asked him to take you into Hilary's cell. I do not say you could replace Hilary, but you

want solitude to stifle your pride. And may God bless you in your undertaking."

Sergius obeyed his superior, showed his letter to the abbot, and, asking his permission, gave up his cell, handed all his belongings over to the monastery, and departed for the hermitage at T——.

The abbot of that hermitage, a former merchant, received Sergius calmly and quietly, and left him alone in his cell. This cell was a cave dug in a mountain, and Hilary was buried there. In a niche at the back was Hilary's grave, and in front was a place to sleep, a small table, and a shelf with ikons and books. At the entrance door, which could be closed, was another shelf. Upon that shelf food was placed once a day by a brother from the monastery.

So Father Sergius became a hermit.

III

DURING the Carnival in Sergius's second year of seclusion a merry company of rich people, ladies and gentlemen from the neighbouring town, made up a troika party after a meal of carnival pancakes and wine. The company was composed of two lawyers, a wealthy landowner, an officer, and four ladies. One of the ladies was the wife of the officer; another was the wife of the landowner; the third was his sister, a young girl; the fourth was a *divorcée*, beautiful, rich, a little mad, whose ways gave rise to amazement and indignation in the town.

The night was fine; the roads smooth as a floor. They drove ten miles out of town, and then held a consultation as to whether they should turn back or go on.

"But where does this road lead?" asked Madame Makovkin, the beautiful *divorcée*.

"To T——, twelve miles further on," said the lawyer who was having a flirtation with Madame Makovkin.

"And beyond?"

"Then to L——, past the monastery."

"Oh, the one where Father Sergius is?"

"Yes."

"The handsome hermit — Kasatsky."

"Yes."

"Oh — messieurs et mesdames! — let us go in and see Kasatsky. We can rest at T—— and have a bite."

"But we shan't get home to-night?"

"We'll just spend the night at Kasatsky's then."

"Of course. There is a hostelry at the monastery, and a very good one. When I was defending Makine I stopped there."

"No, I shall spend the night at Kasatsky's!"

"Even your great power, dear lady, could not make that possible."

"Not possible? I'll bet you!"

"Good! If you spend the night at Kasatsky's I'll pay you whatever you like."

"*A discrétion!*"

"And you the same, remember."

"Agreed! Let's start."

They gave the driver some wine, and they opened a basket of pies, cakes, and wines for themselves. The ladies drew their white furs round about them. The postillions broke into a dispute as to which should go ahead, and the

younger one, turning sharply round, lifted his whip-handle high up and shouted at the horses; the bells tinkled, and the runners creaked beneath the sledge. The sledge swayed and rocked a little; the outer horses trotted smoothly and briskly, with their tightly-bound tails under the gaily decorated breech-bands. The slippery road faded away rapidly. The driver held the reins tightly.

The lawyer and the officer who sat on the back seat talked nonsense to Madame Makovkin's neighbour, and she herself, huddled in her furs, sat motionless and in thought.

"Eternally the same old things! The ugliness of it. Shiny red faces reeking with liquor and with tobacco, the same words, the same thoughts, for ever the same abomination; and they are all content and satisfied that it should be so, and thus they will go on till they die. But I can't — it bores me. I want something to happen that will upset and shatter the whole thing. We might at least be frozen to death as they were at Saratov. What would these people do? How would they behave? Execrably, I suppose. Everybody would think of nothing but himself, and I no less than the rest. But I have beauty — that's something. They know it. Well — and that monk — I wonder if he really is indifferent to beauty.

No, they all care for it, just like that cadet last autumn. And what a fool he was!"

"Ivan Nicolaievich," shè said.

He answered, "Yes?"

"How old is he?"

"Who?"

"Why, Kasatsky."

"Over forty, I should think."

"Does he receive visitors? Does he see everybody?"

"Everybody, yes; but not always."

"Cover up my feet. Not that way — how clumsy you are? Yes, like that. But you needn't squeeze them."

Thus they came to the forest where the cell was.

She stepped out of the sledge and bade them drive on. They tried to dissuade her, but she grew irritable, and commanded them to go on.

Father Sergius was now forty-nine years old. His life in solitude was very hard: not because of fasting and prayers. He endured those easily. But it was the inner struggle which he had not anticipated. There were two reasons for this struggle: his religious doubts and the temptations of desire. He thought these were two different fiends. But they were one and the same. When his doubts were gone lust was gone. But think-

ing these were two different devils, he fought them separately. They, however, always attacked him together.

"O my God, my God," he cried, "why dost Thou not give me faith? There is lust of course, but even St. Anthony and the rest had to fight that; but faith — they had that! There are moments and hours and days when I do not possess it. Why does the world exist with all its charm, if it is sinful and we must renounce it? Why hast Thou created this temptation? Temptation? But isn't this temptation to renounce the joys of the world and to prepare for the life beyond, where there is nothing and where there can be nothing?" Saying this to himself, he became horrified and filled with disgust at himself.

"You vile thing! And you think of being a saint!" he said.

He rose to pray. But when he began praying he saw himself as he appeared at the monastery in his vestments and all his grandeur, and he shook his head.

"No, that is not so. It is a lie. I may deceive all the world, but not myself, and not God. I am insignificant. I am pitiable." And he pushed back the skirts of his cassock, and gazed at his thin legs in their underclothing.

Then he dropped his robe again, and began to

repeat his prayers, making the sign of the cross and prostrating himself.

"Will that couch be my bier?" he read; and, as if a demon whispered to him, he heard: "The solitary couch is also the coffin."

"It is a lie!" and he saw in imagination the shoulders of a widow who had been his mistress. He shook himself and went on reading. After having read the precepts he took up the Gospels. He opened the book at a passage that he had often repeated and knew by heart.

"Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."

He stifled the doubts that arose. Just as one replaces an object without disturbing its balance, he carefully put his faith back into its position while it trembled at its base, and stepped back cautiously so as neither to touch it nor upset it. He again pulled himself together and regained his peace of mind and repeating his childish prayer: "O Lord, take me, take me!" felt not only at ease, but glad and thrilled. He crossed himself and lay down to sleep on his narrow bench, putting his light summer garment under his head. He dropped off to sleep at once. In his light slumber he heard small tinkling bells. He did not know whether he was dreaming or waking. But a knock at the door aroused him. He sat up on his couch, not trusting his senses. The knock

came again. Yes, it was nearer, it was at his own door, and after it came the sound of a woman's voice.

"My God! is it true that the devil takes the form of a woman, as I have read in the lives of the saints? Yes — it is a woman's voice! So timid — so sweet — so tender!" And he spat to exorcise the devil. "No! It was only imagination!" and he went to the corner where the lectern stood and fell on his knees, his regular and habitual motion that of itself gave him comfort and pleasure. He bowed low, his hair falling forward on his face, and pressed his bare forehead to the damp, cold floor. There was a draught from the floor. He read a psalm which, as old Father Piman had told him, would ward off the assaults of the devil. His light, slender frame started up upon its strong limbs, and he meant to go on reading his prayers. But he did not read. He involuntarily inclined his head to listen. He wanted to hear more.

All was silent. From the corner of the roof the same regular drops fell into the tub below. Without was a mist, a fog that swallowed up the snow. It was still, very still. There was a sudden rustle at the window, and a distinct voice, the same tender, timid voice, a voice that could only belong to a charming woman.

“Let me in, for Christ’s sake.”

All the blood rushed to his heart and settled there. He could not even sigh.

“May the Lord appear and his enemies be confounded.”

“But I am not the devil!”

He could not hear that the words were spoken by smiling lips. “I am not the devil. I am just a wicked woman that’s lost her way, literally and figuratively.” (She laughed.) “I am frozen, and I beg for shelter.”

He put his face close to the window. The little ikon lamp was reflected in the glass. He put his hands up to his face and peered between them. Fog, mist, darkness, a tree, and — at the right — She herself, a woman in thick white furs, in a fur cap with a lovely, lovely, gentle, frightened face, two inches away, leaning towards him. Their eyes met and they recognised each other — not because they had ever seen each other before. They had never met. But in the look they exchanged they felt — and he particularly — that they knew each other; that they understood.

After that glance which they exchanged how could he entertain any further doubt that this was the devil instead of just a sweet, timid, frightened woman?

"Who are you? Why have you come?" he asked.

"Open the door, I say," she said with a whimsical authority. "I tell you I've lost my way."

"But I am a monk — a hermit."

"Open that door all the same. Do you want me to freeze while you say your prayers?"

"But how —"

"I won't eat you. Let me in for God's sake. I'm quite frozen."

She began to be really frightened and spoke almost tearfully.

He stepped back into the room, looked at the ikon representing the Saviour with His crown of thorns.

"God help me — help me, O God!" he said, crossing himself and bowing low. Then he went to the door which opened into the little porch, and feeling for the latch tried to unhook it. He heard steps outside. She was going from the window to the door.

"Oh!" he heard her exclaim, and he knew she had stepped into a puddle made by the dripping rain. His hands trembled, and he could not move the hook which stuck a little.

"Well, can't you let me in? I'm quite soaked, and I'm frozen. You are only bent on saving your own soul while I freeze to death."

He jerked the door towards him in order to raise the latch, and then, unable to measure his movements, pushed it open with such violence that it struck her.

"Oh — pardon!" he said suddenly, reverting to his former tone with ladies.

She smiled, hearing that "pardon." "Oh, well, he's not so dreadful," she thought. "Never mind; it is you who must pardon me," she said, passing by him. "I would never have ventured, but such an extraordinary circumstance —"

"If you please," he said, making way for her.

He was struck by the fragrance of fine perfume that he had not smelt for many a long day.

She went through the porch into the chamber. He shut the outer door without latching it and passed into the room after her. Not only in his heart but involuntarily moving his lips he repeated unceasingly, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner, have mercy on me, a sinner."

"If you please," he said to her again.

She stood in the middle of the room, dripping, and examined him closely. Her eyes smiled.

"Forgive me for disturbing your solitude," she said, "but you must see what a position I am placed in. It all came about by our coming out for a drive from town. I made a wager that I

would walk by myself from Vorobievka to town. But I lost my way. That's how I happened to find your cell." Her lies now began.

But his face confused her so that she could not proceed, so she stopped. She expected him to be quite different from the man she saw. He was not as handsome as she had imagined, but he was beautiful to her. His grey hair and beard, slightly curling, his fine, regular features and his eyes like burning coals when he looked straight at her, impressed her profoundly. He saw that she was lying.

"Yes; very well," he said, looking at her and dropping his eyes. "Now I will go in there, and this place is at your disposal."

He took the burning lamp down from before the ikon, lit a candle, and making a low bow went out to the little niche on the other side of the partition, and she heard him begin to move something there.

"He is probably trying to shut himself up away from me," she thought, smiling. Taking off her white fur, she tried to remove her cap, but it caught in her hair and in the knitted shawl she was wearing underneath it. She had not got wet at all standing outside at the window. She said so only as a pretext to be admitted. But she had really stepped into a puddle at the door, and her

left foot was wet to the ankle, and one shoe was full of water. She sat down on his bed, a bench only covered with a carpet, and began to take her shoes off. The little cell pleased her. It was about nine feet by twelve, and as clean as glass. There was nothing in it save the bench on which she sat, the book-shelf above it, and the lectern in the corner. On the door were nails where his fur coat and his cassock hung. Beside the lantern was the image of Christ with His crown of thorns, and the lamp. The room smelt strangely of oil and of earth. She liked everything, even that smell. Her wet feet were uncomfortable, the left one especially, and she took off her shoes and stockings, never ceasing to smile. She was happy not only in having achieved her object, but because she perceived that he was troubled by her presence. He, the charming, striking, strange, attractive man!

"Well, if he wasn't responsive, it doesn't matter," she said to herself. "Father Sergius! Father Sergius!—or what am I to call you!"

"What do you want?" answered a low voice.

"Please forgive me for disturbing your solitude, but really I couldn't help it. I would have fallen ill. And even now I don't know if I shan't. I'm quite wet and my feet are like ice."

"Pardon me," answered the quiet voice. "I cannot be of any assistance to you."

"I would not have come if I could have helped it. I shall only stop till dawn."

He did not answer. She heard him muttering something, probably his prayers.

"I hope you will not come in here," she said, smiling, "for I must undress to get dry."

He did not answer, continuing to read his prayers in a steady voice.

"That is a man," she thought, as she attempted to remove her wet shoe. She tugged at it in vain and felt like laughing. Almost inaudibly, she did laugh; then, knowing that he would hear, and would be moved by it just as she wanted him to be, she laughed louder. The kind, cheerful, natural laughter did indeed affect him just as she had wished.

"I could love a man like that. Such eyes; and his simple, noble face, passionate in spite of all the prayers it mutters. There's no fooling us women in that. The instant he put his face against the window-pane and saw me, he knew me and understood me. The glimmer of it was in his eyes and a seal was set upon it for ever. That instant he began to love me and to want me. Yes — he wants me," she said, finally getting off her shoe and fumbling at her stocking.

To remove those long stockings fastened with elastic, she had to raise her skirts. She felt embarrassed and said, "Don't come in." But there was no answer from the other side and she heard the same monotonous murmurs and movements.

"I suppose he's bowing down to the ground," she thought, "but that won't help him. He's thinking about me just as I'm thinking about him. He's thinking about these very feet of mine," she said, taking off the wet stockings and sitting up on the couch barefooted, with her hands clasped about her knees. She sat awhile like this, gazing pensively before her.

"It's a perfect desert here. Nobody would ever know—"

She got down, took her stockings over to the stove and hung them on the damper. It was such a quaint damper! She turned it, and then slipping quietly over to the couch she sat up there again with her feet upon it. There was absolute silence on the other side of the partition. She looked at the little watch hanging round her neck. Two o'clock. "My people will return about three." She had more than an hour before her.

"Well! Am I going to sit here by myself the whole time? Nonsense! I don't like that. I'll call him at once. Father Sergius! Father Sergius! Sergei Dimitrievich! Prince Kasatsky!"

No answer.

"I say! That's cruel. I wouldn't call you if I didn't need you. I'm ill. I don't know what's the matter," she said in a tone of suffering. "Oh! oh!" she groaned, falling back on the couch, and, strange to say, she really felt that she was getting faint, that everything ached, that she was trembling as if with fever.

"Here, listen! Help me! I don't know what's the matter with. Oh! oh!"

She opened her dress, uncovering her breast, and raised her arms, bare to the elbows, above her head. "Oh, oh!"

All this time he stood on the other side of the door and prayed.

Having finished all the evening prayers, he stood motionless, fixing his eyes on the end of his nose, and praying in his heart he repeated with all his soul: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!"

He had heard everything. He had heard how the silk rustled when she took off her dress; how she stepped on the floor with her bare feet. He heard how she rubbed her hands and feet. He felt himself getting weak, and thought he might be lost at any moment. That was why he prayed unceasingly. His feelings must have been somewhat like those of the hero in the fairy tale who

had to go on and on without ever turning back. Sergius heard and felt that the danger was there just above his head, around him, and that the only way to escape it was not to look round on it for an instant. Then suddenly the desire to see her came upon him, and at that very instant she exclaimed, "Now this is monstrous! I may die."

"Yes, I will come. But I will go like that saint who laid one hand upon the adulteress but put the other upon burning coals."

But there were no burning coals. He looked round. The lamp! The lamp!

He put a finger over the flame and frowned, ready to endure. In the beginning it seemed to him that there was no sensation. But then of a sudden, before he had decided whether it hurt him or how much it hurt him, his face writhed, and he jerked his hand away, shaking it in the air.

"No, that I can't do."

"For God's sake, come to me. I am dying. Oh!"

"Must I be lost? No! I'll come to you presently," he said, opening the door. And without looking at her he passed through the room to the porch where he used to chop wood. He felt about to find the block and the axe which were leaning against the wall.

“Presently!” he said, and taking the axe in his right hand, he laid the forefinger of his left hand upon the block. He raised the axe and struck at the finger below the second joint. The finger flew off more lightly than wood, and bounding up, turned over on the edge of the block and then on to the floor. Sergius heard that sound before he realised the pain, but ere he could recover his senses he felt a burning pain and the warmth of the flowing blood. He hastily pressed the end of his cassock to the maimed finger, pressed it to his hip, and going back into her room stood before the woman.

“What do you want?” he asked her in a low voice.

She looked at his pale face with its trembling cheeks and felt ashamed. She jumped up, grasped her fur, and throwing it around her shoulders tucked herself up in it.

“I was in pain — I’ve taken cold — I — Father Sergius — I —”

He turned his eyes, which were shining with the quiet light of joy upon her, and said,—

“Dear sister, why have you desired to lose your immortal soul? Temptation must come into the world, but woe to him by whom temptation cometh. Pray that God may forgive us both.”

She listened and looked at him. Suddenly she

heard the sound of something dripping. She looked closely and saw that blood was dropping from his hand on to his cassock.

“What have you done to your hand?”

She remembered the sound she had heard, and seizing the little ikon lamp ran out to the porch; there on the floor she saw the bloody finger.

She returned with her face paler than his, and wanted to say something. But he went silently to his little apartment and shut the door.

“Forgive me,” she said. “How can I atone for my sin?”

“Go.”

“Let me bind your wound.”

“Go hence.”

She dressed hurriedly and silently and sat in her furs waiting.

The sound of little bells reached her from outside.

“Father Sergius, forgive me.”

“Go — God will forgive you.”

“Father Sergius, I will change my life. Do not forsake me.”

“Go.”

“Forgive — and bless me!”

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,” she heard from behind the door. “Go.”

She sobbed and went out from the cell.

The lawyer came forward to meet her.

"Well," he said, "I see I have lost. There's no help for it. Where will you sit?"

"I don't care."

She took a seat in the sledge and did not speak a word till they reached home.

A year later she entered a convent as a novice and led a life of severe discipline under the guidance of hermit R—— who wrote her letters at long intervals.

IV

ANOTHER seven years Father Sergius lived as a hermit. In the beginning he accepted a great part of what people used to bring him — tea, sugar, white bread, milk, clothes, and wood.

But as time went on he led a life of ever greater austerity. Refusing anything that could be thought superfluous, he finally accepted nothing but rye bread once a week. All that was brought to him he gave to the poor who visited him.

His entire time was spent in his cell in prayer or in conversation with visitors whose number continually increased.

Father Sergius appeared in church only three times a year, and when it was necessary he went out to fetch water and wood.

After the episode with Madame Makovkin, the change he effected in her life, and her taking the veil, the fame of Father Sergius increased. Visitors came in greater and greater numbers, and monks came to live in his neighbourhood. A church was built there, and a hostelry. Fame, as usual, exaggerated his feats. People came from

a great distance and began bringing invalids to him in the belief that he could heal them.

His first cure happened in the eighth year of his seclusion. He actually healed a boy of fourteen brought to him by his mother who insisted on Father Sergius putting his hand on the child's head. The idea had never occurred to him that he could heal the sick. He would have regarded such a thought as a great sin of pride.

But the mother who brought the boy never ceased imploring him, on her knees.

"Why wouldn't he help her son when he healed other people?" she asked, and again besought him in the name of Christ.

When Father Sergius replied that only God could heal, she said she wanted him only to lay his hands on his head and pray.

Father Sergius refused and went back to his cell. But next morning—for this happened in the autumn and the nights were already cold—coming out of his cell to fetch water, he saw the same mother with her child, the same boy of fourteen, and heard the same petitions.

Father Sergius remembered the parable of the righteous judge, and contrary to his first instinct that he must indubitably refuse, he began to pray, and prayed until a resolve formed itself in his soul. This decision was that he must accede to

the woman's request, and that her faith was sufficient to save her child. As for him, Father Sergius, he would be in that case but the worthless instrument chosen by God.

Returning to the mother, Father Sergius yielded to her request, put his hand on the boy's head and prayed.

The mother left with her son. In a month the boy was cured, and the fame of the holy healing power of "old Father Sergius," as he was called then, spread abroad. From that time not a week passed without sick people coming to Father Sergius.

Complying with the requests of some, he could not refuse the rest; he laid his hands on them and prayed. Many were healed and his fame became more and more widespread.

Having thus passed seven years in the monastery and many years in the hermitage, he looked now like an old man. He had a long grey beard, and his hair had grown thin.

V

Now Father Sergius had for weeks been haunted by one relentless thought, whether it was right for him to have acquiesced in a state of things not so much created by himself as by the archimandrite and the abbot.

This state of things had begun after the healing of the boy of fourteen. Since that time Sergius felt that each passing month, each week and each day, his inner life had somehow been destroyed and a merely external life had been substituted for it. It was as if he had been turned inside out. Sergius saw that he was a means of attracting visitors and patrons to the monastery, and that, therefore, the authorities of the monastery tried to arrange matters in such a way that he might be most profitable to them. For instance, he had no chance of doing any work. Everything was provided that he could require, and the only thing they asked was that he should not refuse his blessing to the visitors who came to seek it. For his convenience days were appointed on which he should receive them. A reception room was arranged for men; and a place was also enclosed

by railings in order that the crowds of women who came to him should not overwhelm him, a place where he could bestow his blessing upon those who came.

When he was told that he was necessary to men, and that if he would follow the rule of Christ's love, he could not refuse them when they desired to see him, and that his holding aloof from them would be cruel, he could not but agree.

But the more he gave himself up to such an existence the more he felt his inner life transformed into an external one. He felt the fount of living water drying up within him; and that everything he did now was performed more and more for man and less for God. Whatever he did, whether admonishing or simply blessing, or praying for the sick, or giving advice on the conduct of life, or listening to expressions of gratitude from those he had helped, or healed (as they say) or instructed or advised, he could not help feeling a certain pleasure when they expressed their gratitude to him. Neither could he be indifferent to the results of his activity, nor to his influence. He now thought himself a shining light. But the more he harboured that idea, the more he was conscious of the fact that the divine light of truth which had previously burned within him was flickering and dying.

"How much of what I do is done for God and how much for man?" That was the question that tormented him. Not that he could not find an answer to it, but he dared not give an answer. He felt deep down in his soul that the devil had somehow changed all his work for God into work for man. Because just as it had formerly been hard for him to be torn from solitude, now solitude itself was hard. He was often wearied with visitors, but in the bottom of his heart he enjoyed their presence and rejoiced in the praise which was heaped on him.

There came a time when he made up his mind to go away, to hide. He even thought out a plan. He got ready a peasant shirt and peasant trousers, a coat and a cap. He explained that he wanted them to give to the poor, and he kept these clothes in his cell, thinking how he would one day put them on and cut his hair, and go away. First he would take a train and travel for about three hundred miles. Then he would get out and walk from village to village. He asked an old soldier how he tramped; if people gave alms, and whether they admitted wayfarers into their houses. The soldier told him where people were most charitable, and where they would take a wanderer in for the night, and Father Sergius decided to act on his advice. One night, he

even put on those clothes and was about to go. But he did not know which was best, to remain or to run away. For a time he was undecided. Then the state of indecision passed. He grew accustomed to the devil and yielded to him; and the peasant clothes only served to remind him of thoughts and feelings that were no more.

Crowds flocked to him increasingly from day to day, and he had less and less time for prayers and for renewing his spiritual strength. Sometimes, in his brighter moments, he thought he was like a place where a brook had once been. There had been a quiet stream of living water which flowed out of him and through him, he thought. That had been real life, the time when she had tempted him. He always thought with ecstasy of that night and of her who was now Mother Agnes. She had tasted of that pure water. Since then the water had hardly been given time to collect before those who were thirsty arrived in crowds, pushing one another aside, and they had trodden down the little brook until nothing but mud was left. So he thought in his clearer moments; but his ordinary state of mind was weariness and a sort of tenderness for himself because of that weariness.

It was spring, the eve of a festal day. Father Sergius celebrated Vespers in the church in the

cave. There were as many people as the place could hold — about twenty altogether. They all belonged to the better classes, rich merchants and such like. Father Sergius admitted every one to his church, but a selection was made by the monk appointed to serve him and by a man on duty who was sent to the hermitage every day from the monastery. A crowd of about eighty pilgrims, chiefly women, stood outside, waiting for Father Sergius to come out and bless them. In that part of the service, when he went to the tomb of his predecessor to bless it, he felt faint, and staggered, and would have fallen had it not been for a merchant who served as deacon who caught him.

“What is the matter with you? Father Sergius, dear Father Sergius! O God!” exclaimed a woman’s voice. “He is as white as a sheet!”

But Father Sergius pulled himself together and though still very pale, pushed aside the deacon and the merchant and resumed the prayers. Father Serafian, the deacon, and the acolytes and a lady, Sophia Ivanovna, who always lived close by the hermitage to attend on Father Sergius, begged him to bring the service to an end.

“No, there’s nothing the matter,” said Father Sergius, faintly smiling from beneath his mous-

tache and continuing his prayers. "Ah, that is the way of saints," he thought.

"A holy man — an angel of God," he heard Sophia Ivanovna and the merchant who had supported him a moment before murmur. He did not heed their entreaties, but went on with the service. Crowding one another as before, they all filed through narrow passages back into the little church where Father Sergius completed vespers, merely curtailing the service a little. Directly after this, having pronounced the benediction on those present, he sat down outside on a little bench beneath an elm tree at the entrance to the cave. He wanted to rest; to breathe fresh air. He felt the need of it; but the moment he appeared, a crowd of people rushed to him soliciting his blessing, his advice, and his help. In the crowd was a number of women, pilgrims going from one holy place to another, from one holy man to another, ever in ecstasy before each sanctuary and before each saint.

Father Sergius knew this common, cold, irreligious, unemotional type. As for the men in the crowd, they were for the most part retired soldiers, long unaccustomed to a settled life, and most of them were poor, drunken old men who tramped from monastery to monastery merely for a living. The dull peasantry also flocked there,

men and women, with their selfish requirements seeking healing or advice in their little daily interests; how their daughters should be married, or a shop hired, or land bought, or how a woman could atone for a child she had lain over in sleep and killed, or for a child she had borne out of wedlock.

All this was an old story to Father Sergius and did not interest him. He knew he would hear nothing new from them. The spectacle of their faces could not arouse any religious emotion in him. But he liked to look at them as a crowd which was in need of his benediction and revered his words. This made him like the crowd, although he found them fatiguing and tiresome.

Father Serafian began to disperse the people saying that Father Sergius was weary. But Father Sergius recollected the words of the Gospel, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not," and touched at his recollection of the passage he permitted them to approach. He rose, walked to the little railing beyond which the crowd had gathered, and began to bless them, but his answers to their questions were so faint that he was moved at hearing himself.

Despite his wish to receive them all, it was too much for him. Everything grew dark again before his eyes, and he staggered and grasped the

railings. He felt the blood rushing to his head, and grew pale and then scarlet.

"I must leave the rest till to-morrow, I can do no more now," he said, and pronouncing a general benediction, returned to the bench.

The merchant supported him again, and taking him by the arm assisted him to be seated. Voices exclaimed in the crowd,—

"Father, dear father, don't forsake us. We are lost without you."

The merchant, having helped Father Sergius to the bench under the elm tree, took upon himself the duties of policeman and began energetically to disperse the crowd. It was true he spoke in a low voice so that Father Sergius could not overhear, but he spoke very decidedly and in an angry tone.

"Get away, get away, I say! He has blessed you. What else do you want? Get along! or you'll catch it. Move on there! Get along there, old woman, with your dirty rags. Go on! Where do you think *you're* going; I told you it was finished. To-morrow's coming, but to-day he's done, I tell you!"

"Dear father! I only want to look on his dear face with my own little eyes," said an old woman.

"Little eyes indeed! You don't get in here!"

Father Sergius noticed that the merchant was doing it rather too thoroughly, and spoke to his attendant saying the crowd was not to be turned away. He knew perfectly well that the crowd would be dispersed all the same, and he desired to remain alone and rest, but he sent his attendant with the order merely to make an impression.

"Well — well — I'm not turning them away; I'm only talking to them," answered the merchant. "They'll drive the man to death. They have no mercy. They're only thinking of themselves. No, I say! Get away! To-morrow!" and he drove them all away.

The merchant took all this trouble because he loved order and liked to turn people away and abuse them; but more because he wanted to have Father Sergius to himself. He was a widower and had an only daughter, an invalid and unmarried. He had brought her fourteen hundred miles to Father Sergius to be healed. During the two years of the girl's illness he had taken her to various cures. First to the university clinic in the principal town of the province, but this was not of much use; then to a peasant in the province of Samara, who did her a little good. Afterwards he took her to a doctor in Moscow and paid him a huge fee; but this did not help at all. Then he was told that Father Sergius wrought

cures, so he brought her to him. Consequently when he had scattered the crowd he approached Father Sergius, and falling upon his knees without any warning, he said in a loud voice,—

“Holy Father! Bless my afflicted child and heal her of her sufferings. I venture to prostrate myself at your holy feet,” and he put one hand on another, palms up, cup-wise. All this he did as if it were something distinctly and rigidly appointed by law and usage; as if it were the sole and precise method by which a man should request the healing of his daughter. He did it with such conviction that even Sergius felt for the moment that that was just the right way. However he bade him rise from his knees and tell him what the trouble was. The merchant said that his daughter, a girl of twenty-two, had fallen ill two years before, after the sudden death of her mother. She just said “Ah!” as he put it, and went out of her mind. He had brought her fourteen hundred miles, and she was waiting in the hostelry till Father Sergius could receive her. She never went out by day, being afraid of the sunlight, but only after dusk.

“Is she very weak?” asked Father Sergius.

“No, she has no special weakness, but she’s rather stout, and the doctor says she’s neurasthenic. If you will just let me fetch her, Father

Sergius, I'll be back with her in a minute. Revive, O holy father, the heart of a parent, restore his line, and save my afflicted offspring with your prayers!" and the merchant fell down on his knees again and bending sideways with his head over his palms, which appeared to hold little heaps of something, remained like a figure in stone. Father Sergius again told him to get up, and thinking once more how trying his work was, and how patiently he bore it in spite of everything, sighed heavily. After a few moments' silence, he said:

"Well, bring her to-night. I will pray over her. But now I am weary," and he closed his eyes. "I will send for you."

The merchant went away, stepping on tiptoe, which made his boots creak still louder, and Father Sergius remained alone.

Father Sergius's life was filled with church services and with visitors; but this day was particularly difficult. In the morning an important official had come to hold a long conference with him. Then a lady came with her son. The son was a young professor, an unbeliever, and his mother, who was ardently religious and devoted to Father Sergius, brought him to Father Sergius that he might talk to him. The talk was very trying. The young man evidently did not wish

to have a discussion with the monk, and just agreed with him in everything, as with an inferior. Father Sergius saw that the youth was an infidel, but that he had nevertheless a clear and tranquil conscience. The memory of the conversation was now unpleasant to him.

"Won't you eat something, Father Sergius?" asked the attendant.

"Very well — bring me something."

The attendant went to a little hut built ten paces from the cave, and Father Sergius remained alone.

The time was long past when Father Sergius lived alone, doing everything for himself and having but a holy wafer and bread for nourishment. He had been warned long ago that he had no right to be careless of his health and he was given wholesome meals, although of Lenten quality. He did not eat much, but more than he had done; and sometimes he even felt a pleasure in eating; the disgust and the sense of sin he had experienced before was gone.

He took some gruel and had a cup of tea with half a roll of white bread. The attendant went away while he remained alone on the bench under the elm-tree. It was a beautiful evening in May. The leaves of the birches, the aspens, the elms, the alder bushes, and the oaks were just beginning

to blossom. The alder bushes behind the elms were still in full bloom. A nightingale was singing near at hand, and two or three more in the bushes down by the river trilled and warbled. From the river came the songs of working-men, perhaps on their way home from their labour. The sun was setting behind the forest and was throwing little broken rays of light among the leaves. This side was bright green and the other side was dark. Beetles were flying about and, colliding together, were falling to the ground. After supper Father Sergius began to repeat a prayer mentally:

“O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us,” and then he read a psalm. Suddenly, in the middle of the psalm a sparrow flew out from a bush on the ground, and hopping along, came to him; then it flew away frightened. He was reading a prayer that bore upon renunciation of the world and hastened to get to the end of it in order that he might send for the merchant and his daughter. He was interested in the daughter because she offered a sort of diversion, and also because she and her father thought him a saint, a saint whose prayer was efficacious. He repudiated the idea, but in the depths of his soul he nevertheless concurred. He often won-

dered how he, Sergius Kasatsky, had contrived to become such an extraordinary saint and worker of miracles, but that it was a fact he did not doubt. He could not fail to believe in the miracles he saw with his own eyes, beginning with the sick boy and ending with this last old woman who had recovered her sight through his prayers. Strange as it was, it was a fact. Accordingly the merchant's daughter interested him as a new individual that had faith in him, and besides, as an occasion of bearing witness to his healing power and to his fame.

"People come thousands of miles. Papers talk about it. The emperor knows. All Europe knows — all godless Europe." And then he felt ashamed of his vanity and began to pray:

"God, King of Heaven, Comforter, True Soul, come into — inspire me — and cleanse me from all sin, and save, O All-merciful, my soul. Cleanse me from the sin of worldly vanity that has overtaken me," he said, remembering how often he had made that prayer and how vain it had been. His prayers worked miracles for others, but as for himself God had not granted him strength to conquer this petty passion. He remembered his prayers at the commencement of his seclusion when he asked for the grace of pur-

ity, humility, and love, and how it seemed to him at that time that God heard his prayers. He had retained his purity and had hewn off his finger. He raised the stump of the finger with folds of skin on it to his lips, and kissed it. It seemed to him now, that at that time when he had been filled with disgust at his own sinfulness, he had been humble; and that he had also possessed love. He recalled also the tender feelings with which he had received the old drunken soldier who had come to ask alms of him; and how he had received *her*. And now; he asked himself whether he loved anybody; whether he loved Sophia Ivanovna or Father Serafian; whether he had any feeling of love for those who had come to him that day. He asked himself if he had felt any love toward the learned young man with whom he had held that instructive discussion with the object only of showing off his own intelligence and proving that he had not fallen behind in knowledge.

He wanted love from them, and rejoiced in it; but felt no love himself for them. Now he had neither love nor humility. He was pleased to hear that the merchant's daughter was twenty-two, and was anxious to know if she was good-looking. When he inquired if she was weak, he only wanted to know if she had feminine charm. "Is it true that I have fallen so low?" he

thought. "God help me! Restore my strength — restore me, O God my Saviour!" and he clasped his hands and began to pray.

The nightingales sang, a beetle flew at him and crept along the back of his neck. He brushed it away.

"But does He exist? What if I am knocking at a house which is locked from without. The bar is on the door, and we can see it. Nightingales, beetles, nature are the bar to our understanding. That young man was perhaps right." He began to pray aloud, and prayed long, till all these thoughts disappeared and he became calm and firm in the faith. He rang the bell, and told the attendant to say that the merchant might now come with his daughter.

The merchant came, leading his daughter by the arm, and brought her to the cell, where he left her.

The daughter was pale, with fair hair. She was very short, and had a frightened, childish face and full figure. Father Sergius remained seated on the bench at the entrance. When the girl passed him and stood near him he blessed her, feeling aghast because of the way in which he looked at her figure. As she passed by him, he felt a sting. He saw by her face that she was sensual and feeble minded. He rose and entered

his cell. She was sitting on a stool waiting for him, and when he entered she rose.

"I want to go back to my papa," she said.

"Do not be afraid," he said. "Where do you feel pain?"

"I feel pain all over," she answered, and suddenly her face brightened with a smile.

"You will regain your health," he said. "Pray."

"What's the use? I've prayed. It doesn't help," and she continued smiling. "I wish you would pray and lay your hands on me. I saw you in a dream."

"How so?"

"I saw you put your hand on my chest."

She took his hand and pressed it to her breast.

"Here."

He yielded his right hand to her.

"What is your name?" he asked, his whole body shaking, and feeling that he was overcome and could not control his instinct.

"Marie, why?"

She took his hand and kissed it, and then put her arm around his waist and pressed him.

"Marie, what are you doing?" he said. "You are a devil, Marie!"

"Oh, perhaps. Never mind."

And embracing him, she sat down at his side on the bed.

At dawn he went out of the door. Had all this really happened? Her father would come. She would tell. "She's a devil. But what have *I* done? Oh, there is the axe which I used to chop off my finger."

He took the axe and went back to the cell.

The attendant came toward him. "Do you want some wood cut? Give me the axe."

He gave him the axe, and entered the cell. She lay asleep. He looked on her with horror. Going back into the cell he put on the peasant clothes, seized the scissors, cut his hair, and then, issuing forth, took the path down the hill to the river, where he had not been for four years.

The road ran along the river. He went by it, walking till noon. Then he went into a cornfield and lay among the corn. Toward evening he approached a village, but did not enter it. He went again to the river, to a cliff.

It was early morning, half an hour before sunrise. All was grey and mournful around him, and a cold, early morning wind blew from the west.

"I must end it all. There is no God. How can I do it? Throw myself in! I can swim;

I should not drown. Hang myself? Yes; just with this belt, to a branch."

This seemed so feasible and so easy that he wanted to pray, as he always did in moments of distress. But there was nothing to pray to. God was not. He dropped down on his elbow, and such a longing for sleep instantly overcame him that he couldn't hold his head up with his arm any longer. Stretching out his arm, he laid his head upon it and went to sleep. But this sleep lasted only a moment. He woke at once, and what followed was half dream and half recollection.

He saw himself as a child in the house of his mother in the country. A carriage was approaching, and out of it stepped Uncle Nicholas Sergei-vich, with a long black beard like a spade, and with him a slender girl, Pashinka, with large soft eyes and a timid, pathetic little face. This girl was taken to the place where the boys were playing, and they were forced to play with her, which was very tedious indeed. She was a silly little girl, and it ended in their making fun of her, and making her show them how she swam. She lay down on the floor and went through the motions. They laughed and turned her into ridicule; which, when she became aware of it, made her blush in patches. She looked so piteous that his con-

science pricked him, and he could never forget her kind, submissive, tremulous smile. Sergius remembered how he had seen her since then. A long time ago, just before he became a monk, she had married a landowner who had squandered all her fortune, and who beat her. She had two children, a son and a daughter; but the son died when he was little, and Sergius remembered seeing her very wretched after that, and then again at the monastery, when she was a widow. She was still just the same, not exactly stupid, but insipid, insignificant, and piteous. She had come with her daughter and her daughter's *fiancé*. They were poor at that time, and later on he heard that she was living in a little provincial town and was almost destitute.

"Why does she come into my head?" he asked himself, but still he could not help thinking about her. "Where is she? What has become of her? Is she as unhappy as she was when she had to show us how she swam on the floor? But what's the use of my thinking of her now? My business is to put an end to myself."

Again he was afraid, and again, in order to spare himself, he began to think about her. Thus he lay a long time, thinking now of his extraordinary end, now of Pashinka. She seemed somehow the means of his salvation. At last he fell

asleep, and in his dream he saw an angel, who came to him and said: —

“Go to Pashinka. Find out what you have to do, and what your sin is, and what is your way of salvation.”

He awoke, convinced that this was a vision from on high. He rejoiced, and resolved to do as he was told in the dream. He knew the town where she lived, three hundred miles away, so he walked to that place.

VI

PASHINKA was no longer Pashinka. She had become Praskovia Mikhailovna, old, wrinkled, and shrivelled, the mother-in-law of a drunken official, Mavrikiyev — a failure. She lived in the little provincial town where he had occupied his last position, and had supported the family: a daughter, a nervous, ailing husband, and five grandchildren. Her sole means of supporting them was by giving music lessons to the daughters of merchants for fifty kopeks an hour. She had sometimes four, sometimes five lessons a day, and earned about sixty roubles a month. They all lived for the moment on that in expectation of another situation. She had sent letters to all her friends and relations, asking for a post for her son-in-law, and had also written to Sergius, but the letter had never reached him.

It was Saturday, and Praskovia Mikhailovna was kneading dough for currant bread such as the cook, a serf on her father's estate, used to make, for she wanted to give her grandchildren a treat on Sunday.

Her daughter Masha was looking after her youngest child, and the eldest boy and girl were at school. As for her husband, he had not slept that night, and was now asleep. Praskovia Mikhailovna had not slept well either, trying to appease her daughter's anger against her husband.

She saw that her son-in-law, being a weak character, could not talk or act differently, and she perceived that the reproaches of his wife availed nothing. All her energies were employed in softening these reproaches. She did not want harsh feelings and resentment to exist. Physically she could not stand a condition of ill-will. It was clear to her that bitter feelings did not mend matters, but simply made them worse. She did not think about it. Seeing anger made her suffer precisely as a bad odour or a shrill sound or a blow.

She was just showing Lucaria, the servant, how to mix the dough when her grandson, Misha, a boy six years old, with little crooked legs in darned stockings, ran into the kitchen looking frightened.

"Grandmother, a dreadful old man wants to see you!"

Lucaria looked out of the door.

"Oh, ma'am, it's a pilgrim."

Praskovia Mikhailovna wiped her thin elbows

with her hands, and then her hands on her apron, and was about to go into the room to get five kopeks out of her purse, when she remembered that she had only a ten kopek piece, so, deciding to give bread instead, she turned to the cupboard. But then she blushed at the thought of having grudged him alms, and ordering Lucaria to cut a slice of bread, went to fetch the ten kopeks. "That serves you right," she said to herself. "Now you must give twice as much."

She gave both bread and money to the pilgrim with apologies, and in doing so she was not at all proud of her generosity. On the contrary, she was ashamed of having given so little. The man had such an imposing appearance.

In spite of having tramped three hundred miles, begging in the name of Christ, and being nearly in rags; in spite of having grown thin and weather-beaten, and having his hair cut, and wearing a peasant cap and boots; in spite, also, of his bowing with great humility, Sergius had the same impressive appearance which had attracted every one to him. Praskovia Mikhailovna did not recognise him. How could she, not having seen him for many years?

"Excuse this humble gift, father. Wouldn't you like something to eat?"

He took the bread and money, and Praskovia

Mikhailovna was astonished that he did not go, but stood looking at her.

"Pashinka, I have come to you. Won't you take me in?"

His beautiful black eyes looked at her intently, imploringly, and shone, tears starting; and his lips quivered painfully under the grey moustache.

Praskovia Mikhailovna pressed her hand to her shrivelled breast, opened her mouth, and stared at the pilgrim with dilated eyes.

"It can't be possible! Steph — Sergius — Father Sergius!"

"Yes, it is I," said Sergius in a low voice. "But no longer Sergius or Father Sergius, but a great sinner, Stephen Kasatsky — a great sinner, a lost sinner. Take me in — help me."

"No, it can't be possible! Such great humility! Come?" She stretched out her hand, but he did not take it. He only followed her.

But where could she lead him? They had very little space. She had a tiny little room for herself, hardly more than a closet, but even that she had given up to her daughter, and now Masha was sitting there rocking the baby to sleep.

"Please, be seated here," she said to Sergius, pointing to a bench in the kitchen. He sat down at once, and took off, with an evidently accustomed

action, the straps of his wallet first from one shoulder and then from the other.

"Heavens! What humility! What an honour, and now —"

Sergius did not answer, but smiled meekly, laying his wallet on one side.

"Masha, do you know who this is?" And Praskovia Mikhailovna told her daughter in a whisper. They took the bed and the cradle out of the little room, and made it ready for Sergius.

Praskovia Mikhailovna led him in.

"Now have a rest. Excuse this humble room. I must go."

"Where?"

"I have lessons. I'm ashamed to say I teach music."

"Music! That is well. But just one thing, Praskovia Mikhailovna. I came to you with an object. Could I have a talk with you?"

"I shall be happy. Will this evening do?"

"It will. One thing more. Do not say who I am. I have only revealed myself to you. No one knows where I went, and no one need know."

"Oh, but I told my daughter —"

"Well, ask her not to tell any one."

Sergius took off his boots and slept after a sleepless night and a forty-mile tramp.

When Praskovia Mikhailovna returned Sergius was sitting in the little room waiting for her. He had not come out for dinner, but had some soup and gruel which Lucaria brought in to him.

"Why did you return earlier than you said?" asked Father Sergius. "May I speak to you now?"

"What have I done to deserve the happiness of having such a guest! I only missed one lesson. That can wait. I have dreamed for a long time of going to see you. I wrote to you. And now this good fortune!"

"Pashinka, please — listen to what I am going to tell you, as if it were a confession; as if it were something I should say to God in the hour of death. Pashinka, I am not a holy man. I am a vile and loathsome sinner. I have gone astray through pride, and I am the vilest of the vile."

Pashinka stared at him. She believed what he said. Then, when she had quite taken it in, she touched his hand and smiled sadly, and said,—

"Stevie, perhaps you exaggerate."

"No, Pashinka, I am an adulterer, a murderer, a blasphemer, a cheat."

"My God, what does he mean?" she muttered.

"But I must go on living. I, who thought I

knew everything, who taught others how to live, I know nothing. I ask you to teach me."

"O Stevie! You are laughing at me. Why do you always laugh at me?"

"Very well; have it as you will that I am laughing at you. Still, tell me how you live, and how you have lived your life."

"I? But I've lived a very bad life, the worst life possible. Now God is punishing me, and I deserve it. And I am so miserable now — so miserable!"

"And your marriage — how did you get on?"

"It was all bad. I married because I fell in love from low motives. Father didn't want me to, but I wouldn't listen to anything. I just married. And then, instead of helping my husband, I made him wretched by my jealousy, which I couldn't overcome."

"He drank, I heard."

"Well, but I didn't give him any peace. I reproached him. That's a disease. He couldn't stop it. I remember now how I took his drink away from him. We had such frightful scenes!" She looked at Kasatsky with pain in her beautiful eyes at the recollection.

Kasatsky called to mind that he had been told that her husband beat Pashinka, and looking at her thin withered neck with veins standing out

behind her ears, the thin coil of hair, half grey, half auburn, he saw it all just as it happened.

"Then I was left alone with two children, and with no means."

"But you had an estate!"

"Oh, that was sold when Vasily was alive. And the money was — spent. We had to live, and I didn't know how to work — like all the young ladies of that time. I was worse than the rest — quite helpless. So we spent everything we had. I taught the children. Masha had learnt something. Then Misha fell ill when he was in the fourth class in the school, and God took him. Masha fell in love with Vania, my son-in-law. He's a good man but very unfortunate. He's ill."

"Mother," interrupted her daughter, "take Misha. I can't be everywhere."

Praskovia Mikhailovna started, rose, and stepping quickly in her worn shoes, went out of the room and came back with a boy of two in her arms. The child was throwing himself backwards and grabbing at her shawl.

"Where was I? Yes — he had a very good post here, and such a good chief, too. But poor Vania couldn't go on, and he had to give up his position."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Neurasthenia. It's such a horrid illness. We have been to the doctor, but he ought to go away, and we can't afford it. Still, I hope it will pass. He doesn't suffer much pain, but —"

"Lucaria!" said a feeble and angry voice. "She's always sent out when I need her. Mother!"

"I'm coming," said Praskovia Mikhailovna, again interrupting her conversation. "You see, he hasn't had his dinner yet. He can't eat with us."

She went out and arranged something, and came back, wiping her thin, dark hands.

"Well, this is the way I live. I complain, and I'm not satisfied, but, thank God, all my grandchildren are such nice healthy children, and life is quite bearable. But why am I talking about myself?"

"What do you live on?"

"Why, I earn a little. How I used to hate music! and now it's so useful to me!"

Her small hand lay on the chest of drawers that stood beside her where she was sitting, and she drummed exercises with her thin fingers.

"How much are you paid for your lessons?"

"Sometimes a rouble, sometimes fifty kopeks, and sometimes thirty. They are all so kind to me."

"And do your pupils get on well?" asked Kasatsky, smiling faintly with his eyes.

Praskovia Mikhailovna did not believe at first that he was asking her seriously, and looked inquiringly into his eyes.

"Some of them do," she said. "I have one very nice pupil — the butcher's daughter. Such a good, kind girl. If I were a clever woman I could surely use my father's influence and get a position for my son-in-law. But it is my fault they are so badly off. I brought them to it."

"Yes, yes," said Kasatsky, dropping his head. "Well, Pashinka, and what about your attitude to the church?"

"Oh, don't speak of it! I'm so bad that way. I have neglected it so! When the children have to go, I fast and go to communion with them, but as for the rest of the time I often do not go for a month. I just send them."

"And why don't you go?"

"Well, to tell the truth —" she blushed — "I'm ashamed for Masha's sake and the children's to go in my old clothes. And I haven't anything else. Besides, I'm just lazy."

"And do you pray at home?"

"I do, but it's just a mechanical sort of praying. I know it's wrong, but I have no real religious feeling. I only know I'm wicked — that's all."

"Yes, yes. That's right, that's right!" said Kasatsky, as if in approval.

"I'm coming — I'm coming!" she called, in answer to her son-in-law, and, tidying her hair, went to the other room.

This time she was absent a long while. When she returned, Kasatsky was sitting in the same position, his elbow on his knee and his head down. But his wallet was ready strapped on his back.

When she came in with a little tin lamp without a shade, he raised his beautiful, weary eyes, and sighed deeply.

"I didn't tell them who you were," she began shyly. "I just said you were a pilgrim — a nobleman — and that I used to know you. Won't you come into the dining-room and have tea?"

"No."

"Then I'll bring some in to you here."

"No; I don't want anything. God bless you, Pashinka. I am going now. If you have any pity for me, don't tell any one you have seen me. For the love of God, tell no one. I thank you. I would kneel down before you, but I know it would only make you feel awkward. Forgive me, for Christ's sake."

"Give me your blessing."

"God bless you. Forgive me, for Christ's sake."

He rose to go, but she restrained him and brought him some bread and butter, which he took and departed.

It was dark, and he had hardly passed the second house when he was lost to sight, and she only knew he was there because the dog at the priest's house was barking.

"That was the meaning of my vision. Pashinka is what I should have been, and was not. I lived for man, on the pretext of living for God; and she lives for God, imagining she lives for man! Yes; one good deed — a cup of cold water given without expectation of reward — is worth far more than all the benefits I thought I was bestowing on the world. But was there not, after all, one grain of sincere desire to serve God?" he asked himself. And the answer came: "Yes, there was; but it was so soiled, so overgrown with desire for the world's praise. No; there is no God for the man who lives for the praise of the world. I must now seek *Him*."

He walked on, just as he had made his way to Pashinka, from village to village, meeting and parting with other pilgrims, and asking for bread and a night's rest in the name of Christ. Sometimes an angry housekeeper would abuse him, sometimes a drunken peasant would revile him;

but for the most part he was given food and drink, and often something to take with him. Many were favourably disposed towards him on account of his noble bearing. Some, on the other hand, seemed to enjoy the sight of a gentleman so reduced to poverty. But his gentleness vanquished all hearts.

He often found a Bible in a house where he was staying. He would read it aloud, and the people always listened to him, touched by what he read them, and wondering, as if it were something new, although so familiar.

If he succeeded in helping people by his advice or by knowing how to read and write, or by settling a dispute, he did not afterwards wait to see their gratitude, for he went away directly. And little by little God began to reveal Himself within him.

One day he was walking along the road with two women and a soldier. They were stopped by a party consisting of a lady and gentleman in a trap drawn by a trotter, and another gentleman and lady riding. The gentleman beside the lady in the trap was evidently a traveller — a Frenchman — while her husband was on horseback with his daughter.

The party stopped to show the Frenchman the pilgrims, who, according to a superstition of the

Russian peasantry, show their superiority by tramping instead of working. They spoke French, thinking they would not be understood.

"*Demandez-leur,*" asked the Frenchman, "*s'ils sont bien sûres de ce que leur pèlerinage est agréable à Dieu?*"

The old woman answered,—

"Just as God wills it. Our feet have arrived at the holy places, but we can't tell about our hearts."

They asked the soldier. He answered that he was alone in the world, and belonged nowhere.

They asked Kasatsky who he was.

"A servant of God."

"*Qu'est-ce-qu'il dit? Il ne répond pas?*"

"*Il dit qu'il est un serviteur de Dieu.*"

"*Il doit être un fils de prêtre. Il a de la race. Avez-vous de la petite monnaie?*"

The Frenchman had some change, and gave each of them twenty kopeks.

"*Mais dites-leur que ce n'est pas pour les cierges que je leur donne, mais pour qu'ils se régalaient du thé. Tea — tea,*" he said, with a smile.

"*Pour vous, mon vieux.*" And he patted Kasatsky on the shoulder with his gloved hand.

"Christ save you," said Kasatsky, and without putting on his hat, bent his bald head.

Kasatsky rejoiced particularly in this incident, because he had shown contempt for the world's

opinion, and had done something quite trifling and easy. He accepted twenty kopeks, and gave them afterwards to a blind beggar who was a friend of his.

The less he cared for the opinion of the world the more he felt that God was with him.

For eight months Kasatsky tramped in this fashion, until at last he was arrested in a provincial town in a night-shelter where he passed the night with other pilgrims. Having no passport to show, he was taken to the police-station. When he was asked for documents to prove his identity he said he had none; that he was a servant of God. He was numbered among the tramps and sent to Siberia.

There he settled down on the estate of a rich peasant, where he still lives. He works in the vegetable garden, teaches the children to read and write, and nurses the sick.

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

THE WISDOM OF CHILDREN

1. ON RELIGION.
2. ON WAR.
3. ON STATE AND FATHERLAND.
4. ON TAXES.
5. ON JUDGING.
6. ON KINDNESS.
7. ON REMUNERATION OF LABOUR.
8. ON DRINK.
9. ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.
10. ON PRISONS.
11. ON WEALTH.
12. ON THOSE WHO OFFEND YOU.
13. ON THE PRESS.
14. ON REPENTANCE.
15. ON ART.
16. ON SCIENCE.
17. ON GOING TO LAW.
18. ON THE CRIMINAL COURT.
19. ON PROPERTY.
20. ON CHILDREN.
21. ON EDUCATION.

ON RELIGION.

BOY.

WHY is Nurse so nicely dressed to-day, and why did she make me wear that new shirt?

MOTHER.

Because this is a holiday, and we are going to church.

BOY.

What holiday?

MOTHER.

Ascension day.

BOY.

What does Ascension mean?

MOTHER.

It means that Jesus Christ has ascended to heaven.

BOY.

What does that mean: ascended?

MOTHER.

It means that He flew up to heaven.

Boy.

How did he fly? With his wings?

MOTHER.

Without any wings whatever. He simply flew up because He is God, and God can do anything.

Boy.

But where did he fly to? Father told me there was nothing in heaven at all, and we only think we see something; that there's nothing but stars up there, and behind them more stars still, and that there is no end to it. Then where did He fly to?

MOTHER.

(*smiling.*) You are unable to understand everything. You must believe.

Boy.

What must I believe?

MOTHER.

What you are told by grown-up people.

Boy.

But when I said to you that somebody was going to die because some salt had been spilt, you said I was not to believe in nonsense.

MOTHER.

Of course you are not to believe in nonsense.

BOY.

But how am I to know what is nonsense and what is not?

MOTHER.

You must believe what the true faith says, and not in nonsense.

BOY.

Which is the true faith then?

MOTHER.

Our faith is the true one. (*To herself.*) I am afraid I am talking nonsense. (*Aloud.*) Go and tell father we are ready for church, and get your coat.

BOY.

And shall we have chocolate after church?

ON WAR

KARLCHEN SCHMIDT, *nine years*; PETIA ORLOV,
ten years; and MASHA ORLOV, *eight years*.

KARLCHEN.

. . . Because we Prussians will not allow Russia
to rob us of our land.

PETIA.

But we say this land belongs to us; we con-
quered it first.

MASHA.

To whom? Is it ours?

PETIA.

You are a child, and you don't understand.
"To us" means to our state.

KARLCHEN.

It is this way; some belong to one state and
some to another.

MASHA.

What do I belong to?

PETIA.

You belong to Russia, like the rest of us.

MASHA.

And if I don't want to?

PETIA.

It doesn't matter whether you want to or not. You are Russian all the same. Every nation has its Tsar, its King.

KARLCHEN.

(*interrupting.*) And a parliament.

PETIA.

Each state has its army, each state raises taxes.

MASHA.

But why must each state stand by itself?

PETIA.

What a silly question! Because each state *is* a separate one.

MASHA.

But why must it exist apart?

PETIA.

Can't you understand? Because everybody loves his own country.

MASHA.

I don't understand why they must be separate from the rest. Wouldn't it be better if they all kept together?

PETIA.

To keep together is all right when you play games. But this is no game: it is a very serious matter.

MASHA.

I don't understand.

KARLCHEN.

You will when you grow up.

MASHA.

Then I don't want to grow up.

PETIA.

Such a tiny girl, and obstinate already, just like all of them.

ON STATE AND FATHERLAND

GAVRILA, *a soldier in the reserve, a servant.*

MISHA, *his master's young son.*

GAVRILA.

Good-bye, Mishenka, my dear little master.
Who knows whether God will permit me to see
you again?

MISHA.

Are you really leaving?

GAVRILA.

I have to. There is war again. And I am in
the reserve.

MISHA.

A war with whom? Who's fighting, and who
are they fighting against?

GAVRILA.

God knows. It's very difficult to understand
all that. I have read about it in the papers, but I

can't make it out. They say that some one in Austria has a grudge against us because of some favour he did to what's-their-names. . . .

MISHA.

But what are you fighting for?

GAVRILA.

I am fighting for the Tsar, of course; for my country and the Orthodox Faith.

MISHA.

But you don't wish to go to the war, do you?

GAVRILA.

Certainly not. To leave my wife and my children. . . . Do you suppose I would leave this happy life of my own free will?

MISHA.

Then why do you go? Tell them you don't want to, and stop here. What can they do to you?

GAVRILA.

(*laughing.*) What can they do? They will take me by force.

MISHA.

Who can take you by force?

GAVRILA.

Men who have to obey, and who are exactly in my position.

MISHA.

Why will they take you by force if they are in the same position?

GAVRILA.

Because of the authorities. They will be ordered to take me, and they will have to do it.

MISHA.

But suppose they don't want to?

GAVRILA.

They have to obey.

MISHA.

But why?

GAVRILA.

Why? Because of the law.

MISHA.

What law

GAVRILA.

You are a funny boy. It's a pleasure to chat with you. But now I had better go and get the samovar ready. It will be for the last time.

ON TAXES

THE BAILIFF AND GRUSHKA.

BAILIFF.

(entering a poor cottage. Nobody is in except GRUSHKA, a little girl of seven. He looks around him.) Nobody at home?

GRUSHKA.

Mother has gone to bring home the cow, and Fedka is at work in the master's yard.

BAILIFF.

Well, tell your mother the bailiff called. Tell her I am giving her notice for the third time, and that she must pay her taxes before Sunday without fail, or else I will take her cow.

GRUSHKA.

The cow? Are you a thief? We will not let you take our cow.

BAILIFF.

(smiling.) What a smart girl, I say! What is your name?

GRUSHKA.

Grushka.

BAILIFF.

You are a good girl, Grushka. Now listen. Tell your mother that, although I am not a thief, I will take her cow.

GRUSHKA.

Why will you take our cow if you are not a thief?

BAILIFF.

Because what is due must be paid. I shall take the cow for the taxes that are not paid.

GRUSHKA.

What's that: taxes?

BAILIFF.

What a nuisance of a girl! What are taxes? They are money paid by the people by the order of the Tsar.

GRUSHKA.

To whom?

BAILIFF.

The Tsar will look after that when the money comes in.

GRUSHKA.

He's not poor, is he? We are the poor people.

The Tsar is rich. Why does he want us to give him money?

BAILIFF.

He does not take it for himself. He spends it on us, fools that we are. It all goes to supply our needs—to pay the authorities, the army, the schools. It is for our own good that we pay taxes.

GRUSHKA.

How does it benefit us if our cow is taken away? There's no good in that.

BAILIFF.

You will understand that when you are grown-up. Now, mind you give your mother my message.

GRUSHKA.

I will not repeat all your nonsense to her. You can do whatever you and the Tsar want. And we shall mind our own business.

BAILIFF.

What a devil of a girl she will be when she grows up!

ON JUDGING

MITIA, *a boy of ten*; ILIUSHA, *a boy of nine*;
SONIA, *a girl of six*.

MITIA.

I told Peter Semenovitch we could get used to wearing no clothes at all. And he said, "That is impossible." Then I told him Michael Ivanovich said that just as we have managed to get our bare faces used to the cold, we could do the same with our whole body. Peter Semenovitch said, "Your Michael Ivanovich is a fool." (*He laughs.*) And Michael Ivanovich said to me only yesterday, "Peter Semenovitch is talking a lot of nonsense. But, of course," he added, "there's no law for fools." (*He laughs.*)

ILIUSHA.

If I were you I would tell Peter Semenovitch, "You abuse Michael Ivanovich, and he does the same to you."

MITIA.

No; but truly, I wish I knew which of them is the fool.

SONIA.

They both are. Whoever calls another person a fool is a fool himself.

ILIUSHA.

And you have called them both fools. Then you are one also.

MITIA.

Well, I hate people saying things about each other behind their backs and never openly to their faces. When I am grown-up I shan't be like that. I shall always say what I think.

ILIUSHA.

So shall I.

SONIA.

And I shall do just whatever I like.

MITIA.

What do you mean?

SONIA.

Why, I shall say what I think — if I choose. And if I don't choose, I won't.

ILIUSHA.

You're a big fool, that is what you are.

SONIA.

And you have just said you will never call people names. But of course. . . .

ON KINDNESS

The children, MASHA and MISHA, are building a tent for their dolls in front of the house.

MISHA.

(in an angry tone to MASHA.) No, not this. Bring that stick there. What a blockhead you are!

AN OLD WOMAN.

(coming out of the house, crossing herself, and muttering.) Jesus Christ reward her! What an angel! She has pity on every one.

(The CHILDREN cease to play, and look at the old woman.)

MISHA.

Who is as good as all that?

OLD WOMAN.

Your mother. She has God in her soul. She pities us, the poor. She has given me a skirt — and some tea, and money too. The Queen of

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Heaven save her! Not like that godless man. "Such a lot of you," he says, "tramping about here." And such savage dogs he has!

MISHA.

Who is that?

OLD WOMAN.

The man opposite. The wine merchant. A very unkind gentleman, I can tell you. But never mind. I am so thankful to the dear lady. She has given me presents, has relieved me, miserable creature that I am. How could we exist if it were not for such kind people? (*She weeps.*)

MASHA.

(*to MISHA.*) How good she is!

OLD WOMAN.

When you are grown up, children, be as kind as she is to the poor. God will reward you.

(*Exit.*)

MISHA.

How wretched she is!

MASHA.

I am so glad mother has given her something.

MISHA.

Why shouldn't one give, if one has got plenty

of everything oneself? We are not poor, and she is.

MASHA.

You remember, John the Baptist said: Whoever has two coats, let him give away one.

MISHA.

Oh, when I am grown up I will give away everything I have.

MASHA.

Not everything, I should think.

MISHA.

Why not?

MASHA.

But what would you have left for yourself?

MISHA.

I don't care. We must always be kind. Then the whole world will be happy.

(MISHA stopped playing with his sister, went to the nursery, tore a page out of a copy-book, wrote a line on it, and put it in his pocket. On that page was written: WE MUST BE KIND.)

ON REMUNERATION OF LABOUR

The FATHER; KATIA, a girl of nine; FEDIA, a boy of eight.

KATIA.

Father, our sledge is broken. Couldn't you mend it for us?

FATHER.

No, darling, I can not. I don't know how to do it. Give it to Prohor; he will put it right for you.

KATIA.

We have asked him to already. He says he is busy. He is making a gate.

FATHER.

Well, then, you must just wait a little with your sledge.

FEDIA.

And you, father, can't you mend it for us, really?

FATHER.

(*smiling.*) Really, my boy.

FEDIA.

Can't you do any work at all?

FATHER.

(*laughing.*) Oh yes, there are some kinds of work I can do. But not the kind that Prohor does.

FEDIA.

Can you make samovars like Vania?

FATHER.

No.

FEDIA.

Or harness horses?

FATHER.

Not that either.

FEDIA.

I wonder why are we all unable to do any work, and they do it all for us. Ought it to be like that?

FATHER.

Everybody has to do the work he is fit for. Learn, like a good boy, and you will know what work everybody has to do.

FEDIA.

Are we not to learn how to prepare food and to harness horses?

FATHER.

There are things more necessary than that.

FEDIA.

I know: to be kind, not to get cross, not to abuse people. But isn't it possible to do the cooking and harness horses, and be kind just the same? Isn't that possible?

FATHER.

Undoubtedly. Just wait till you are grown up. Then you will understand.

FEDIA.

And what if I don't grow up?

FATHER.

Don't talk nonsense!

KATIA.

Then we may ask Prohor to mend the sledge?

FATHER.

Yes, do. Go to Prohor and tell him I wish him to do it.

ON DRINK

An evening in the autumn.

(MAKARKA, a boy of twelve, and MARFUTKA, a girl of eight, are coming out of the house into the street. MARFUTKA is crying. PAVLUSHKA, a boy of ten, stands before the house next door.)

PAVLUSHKA.

Where the devil are you going to, both of you?
Have you any night work?

MAKARKA.

Crazy drunk again.

PAVLUSHKA.

Who? Uncle Prohor?

MAKARKA.

Of course.

MARFUTKA.

He is beating mother —

MAKARKA.

I won't go inside to-night. He would hit me also. (*Sitting down on the doorstep.*) I will stay here the whole night. I will.

(MARFUTKA *weeps.*)

PAVLUSHKA.

Stop crying. Never mind. It can't be helped. Stop crying, I say.

MARFUTKA.

If I was the Tsar, I would have the people who give him any drink just beaten to death. I would not allow anybody to sell brandy.

PAVLUSHKA.

Wouldn't you? But it is the Tsar himself who sells it. He doesn't let anybody else sell it, for fear it would lessen his own profits.

MARFUTKA.

It is a lie!

PAVLUSHKA.

Humph! A lie! You just ask anybody you like. Why have they put Akulina in prison? Because they did not want her to sell brandy and lessen their profits.

MAKARKA.

Is that really so! I heard she had done something against the law.

PAVLUSHKA.

What she did against the law was selling brandy.

MARFUTKA.

I would not allow her to sell it either. It is just that brandy that does all the mischief. Sometimes he is very nice, and then at other times he hits everybody.

MAKARKA.

(to PAVLUSHKA.) You say very strange things. I will ask the schoolmaster to-morrow. He must know.

PAVLUSHKA.

Do ask him.

(The next morning PROHOR, MAKARKA'S father, after a night's sleep, goes to refresh himself with a drink; MAKARKA'S mother, with a swollen eye, is kneading bread. MAKARKA has gone to school. The SCHOOLMASTER is sitting at the door of the village school, watching the children coming in.)

MAKARKA.

(coming up to the schoolmaster.) Tell me, please, Eugene Semenovitch, is it true, what a fellow was telling me, that the Tsar makes a busi-

ness of selling brandy, and that is why Akulina has been sent to prison?

SCHOOLMASTER.

That is a very silly question, and whoever told you that is a fool. The Tsar sells nothing whatsoever. A tsar never does. As for Akulina, she was put in prison because she was selling brandy without a license, and was thereby lessening the revenues of the Crown.

MAKARKA.

How lessening?

SCHOOLMASTER.

Because there is a duty on spirits. A barrel costs so much in the factory, and is sold to the public for so much more. This surplus constitutes the income of the state. The largest revenue comes from it, and amounts to many millions.

MAKARKA.

Then the more brandy people drink the greater the income?

SCHOOLMASTER.

Certainly. If it were not for that income there would be nothing to keep the army with, or schools, or all the rest of the things you need.

MAKARKA.

But if all those things are necessary, why not take the money directly for the necessary things? Why get it by means of brandy?

SCHOOLMASTER.

Why? Because that is the law. But the children are all in now. Take your seats.

ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

PETER PETROVICH, *a professor.* MARIA IVANOVNA, *his wife (sewing.)* FEDIA, *their son, a boy of nine (listening to his father's conversation.)* IVAN VASILIEVICH, *counsel for the prosecution in the court martial.*

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

The experience of history cannot be gainsaid. We have not only seen in France after the revolution, and at other historical moments, but in our own country as well, that doing away with — I mean the removal of perverted and dangerous members of society has in fact the desired result.

PETER PETROVICH.

No, we cannot know what the consequences of this are in reality. The proclamation of a state of siege is therefore not justified.

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

But neither have we the right to presume that the consequences of a state of siege must be bad,

or, if it proves to be so, that such consequences are brought about by the employment of a state of siege. This is one point. The other is that fear cannot fail to influence those who have lost every human sensibility and are like beasts. What except fear could have any effect on men like that one who calmly stabbed an old woman and three children in order to steal three hundred roubles?

PETER PETROVICH.

But I am not against capital punishment in principle; I am only opposed to the special courts martial which are so often formed. If these frequent executions did nothing but inspire fear, it would be different. But in addition they pervert the mind, and killing becomes a habit of thought.

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

There again we don't know anything about the remote consequences, but we do know, on the contrary, how beneficial. . . .

PETER PETROVICH.

Beneficial?

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

Yes, how beneficial the immediate results are, and we have no right to deny it. How could

society similarly fail to exact the penalty from such a wretch as . . .

PETER PETROVICH.

You mean society must take its revenge?

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

No, the object is not revenge. On the contrary, it must substitute for personal revenge the penalty imposed for the good of the community.

PETER PETROVICH.

But in that case it must be subject to regulations settled by the law once for ever, and not as a special order of things.

IVAN VASILIEVICH.

The penalty imposed by the community is a substitute for casual, exaggerated revenge, in many cases ungrounded and erroneous, which a private individual might take.

PETER PETROVICH.

(*passionately.*) Do you really mean to say the penalty imposed by society is never casual, is always well founded, is never erroneous? I cannot admit that. None of your arguments could ever convince me or anyone else that this is true

of a state of siege, under which thousands have been executed . . . and under which executions are still going on — that all this is both just and legal, and beneficial into the bargain! (*Rises and walks up and down in great agitation.*)

FEDIA.

(*to his mother.*) Mother, what is father talking about?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Father thinks it wrong that so many people are put to death.

FEDIA.

Do you mean really put to death?

MARIA IVANOVNA.

Yes. He thinks it ought not to be done so frequently.

FEDIA.

(*coming up to his father.*) Father, isn't it written in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill"? Doesn't that mean you are not to kill at all?

PETER PETROVICH.

(*smiling.*) That does not refer to what we are talking about. It only means that men are not to kill other men.

FEDIA.

But when they execute they kill, don't they?

PETER PETROVICH.

Certainly. But the thing is to know why and when it is permissible.

FEDIA.

When is it?

PETER PETROVICH.

Why, think of a war, or of a great villain who has committed many murders. How could one leave him unpunished?

FEDIA.

But isn't it written in the Gospel that we must love and forgive everybody?

PETER PETROVICH.

If we could do that it would be splendid. But that cannot be.

FEDIA.

Why?

PETER PETROVICH.

(*to IVAN VASILIEVICH, who listens to FEDIA with a smile.*) As I said, dear Ivan Vasilievich, I cannot and will not admit the benefit of a state of siege and courts-martial.

ON PRISONS

SEMKA, *a boy of thirteen*; AKSUTKA, *a girl of ten*; PALASHKA, *a girl of nine*; VANKA, *a boy of eight*. *They are sitting at the well, with baskets of mushrooms which they have gathered.*

AKSUTKA.

Aunt Matrena was crying so desperately. And the children too would not leave off howling, all at the same time.

VANKA.

Why were they howling?

PALASHKA.

What about? Why, their father has been taken off to prison. Who should cry but the family?

VANKA.

Why is he in prison?

AKSUTKA.

I don't know. They came and told him to get

his things ready and led him away. We saw it all from our cottage.

SEMKA.

Serves him right for being a horse-stealer. He stole a horse from Demkin's place and one from Hramov's. He and his gang also got hold of our gelding. Who could love him for that?

AKSUTKA.

That is all right, but I am sorry for the poor brats. There are four of them. And so poor — no bread in the house. To-day they had to come to us.

SEMKA.

Serves the thief right.

MITKA.

But he's the only one that is the thief. Why must his children become beggars?

SEMKA.

Why did he steal?

MITKA.

The kid's didn't steal — it is just he.

SEMKA.

Kids indeed! Why did he do wrong? That doesn't alter the case, that he has got children. Does that give him the right to be a thief?

VANKA.

What will they do to him in prison?

AKSUTKA.

He will just sit there. That's all.

VANKA.

And will they give him food?

SEMKA.

That's just the reason why they're not afraid, those damned horse-thieves! He doesn't mind going to prison. They provide him with everything and he has nothing to do but sit idle the whole day long. If I were the Tsar, I would know how to manage those horse-thieves. . . . I would teach them a lesson that would make them give up the habit of stealing. Now he has nothing to worry him. He sits in the company of fellows like himself, and they teach each other how to steal. Grandfather said Petrusha was quite a good boy when he went to prison for the first time, but he came out a desperate villain. Since then he's taken to —

VANKA.

Then why do they put people in prison?

SEMKA.

Just ask them.

AKSUTKA.

He will have all his food given to him —

SEMKA.

(*agreeing.*) So he will get more accustomed to finding the food ready for him!

AKSUTKA.

While the kiddies and their mother have to die of starvation. They are our neighbours; we can't help pitying them. When they come asking for bread, we can't refuse. How could we?

VANKA.

Then why are those people put in prison?

SEMKA.

What else could be done with them?

VANKA.

What? What could be done? One must somehow manage that. . . .

SEMKA.

Yes, somehow! But you don't know how. There have been people with more brains than you've got who have thought about that, and they couldn't invent anything.

PALASHKA.

I think if I had been a queen

AKSUTKA.

(*laughing.*) Well, what would you have done, my queen?

PALASHKA.

I would have things so that nobody would steal and the children would not cry.

AKSUTKA.

How would you do that?

PALASHKA.

I would just see that everybody was given what he needed, that nobody was wronged by anybody else, and that they were all happy.

SEMKA.

Three cheers for the queen! But how would you manage that?

PALASHKA.

I would just do it, you would see.

MITKA.

Let us all go to the birch woods. The girls have been gathering a lot there lately.

SEMKA.

All right. Come along, you fellows. And you, queen, mind you don't drop your mushrooms. You are so sharp.

(*They get up and go away.*)

ON WEALTH

The LANDLORD, his WIFE, their DAUGHTER and their son VASIA, six years old, are having tea on the veranda. The grown-up children are playing tennis. A YOUNG BEGGAR comes up to the veranda.

LANDLORD.

(to the beggar.) What do you want?

BEGGAR.

(bowing to him.) I dare say you know. Have pity on a man out of work. I am tramping, with nothing to eat, and no clothes to wear. I have been to Moscow, and am trying to get home. Help a poor man.

LANDLORD.

Why are you poor?

BEGGAR.

Why? Because I haven't got anything.

LANDLORD.

You would not be poor if you worked.

BEGGAR.

I would be glad to, but I can't get a job. Everything is shut down now.

LANDLORD.

How is it other people find work and you cannot?

BEGGAR.

Believe me, upon my soul, I would be only too glad to work. But I can't find a job. Have pity on me, sir. I have not eaten for two days, and I've been tramping all the time.

LANDLORD.

(*to his wife in French.*) Have you any change? I have only notes.

HIS WIFE.

(*to Vasia.*) Be a good boy, go and fetch my purse; it is in my bag on the little table beside my bed.

(*VASIA does not hear what his mother says; he has his eyes fixed on the beggar.*)

THE WIFE

Don't you hear, Vasia? (*Pulling him by the sleeve.*) Vasia!

VASIA.

What, mother?

(THE WIFE repeats her directions.)

VASIA.

(jumping up.) I am off. *(Goes, looking back at the beggar.)*

LANDLORD.

(to the beggar.) Wait a moment. *(BEGGAR steps aside.)*

LANDLORD.

(to his wife, in French.) Is it not dreadful? So many are out of work now. It is all laziness. Yet, it is horrid if he really is hungry.

HIS WIFE.

I hear it is just the same abroad. I have read that in New York there are 100,000 unemployed. Another cup of tea?

LANDLORD.

Yes, but much weaker. *(He lights a cigarette; they stop talking.)**(BEGGAR looks at them, shakes his head and coughs, evidently to attract their attention.)**(VASIA comes running with the purse looks round for the beggar and, passing the purse to his mother, looks again fixedly at the beggar.)*

LANDLORD.

(taking a ten kopek piece out of the purse.)

There, What's-your-name, take that.

BEGGAR.

(bows, pulls off his cap and takes the money.)

Thank you, thank you for that much. Many thanks for having pity on a poor man.

LANDLORD.

I pity you chiefly for being out of work. Work would save you from poverty. He who works will never be poor.

BEGGAR.

(having received the money, puts on his cap and turns away.) They say truly that work does not make a rich man but a humpback. *(Exit.)*

VASIA.

What did he say!

LANDLORD.

He repeated that stupid peasant's proverb, that work does not make a rich man but a humpback.

VASIA.

What does that mean?

LANDLORD.

It is supposed to mean that work makes a man's back crooked, without ever making him rich.

VASIA.

But that is not true, is it?

FATHER.

Of course not. Those who tramp about like that man there and have no desire to work, are always poor. It's only those who work, who get rich.

VASIA.

Why are we rich, then, when we don't work?

MOTHER.

(*laughing.*) How do you know father doesn't work?

VASIA.

I don't know, but since we are very rich, father ought to be working very hard. Is he, I wonder?

FATHER.

There is work and work. My work is perhaps work that everybody could not do.

VASIA.

What is your work?

FATHER.

My work is to provide for your food, your clothes, and your education.

VASIA.

But hasn't he to provide all that also? Then why is he so miserable when we are so —

FATHER.

(*laughing.*) What a self-made socialist, I say!

MOTHER.

Yes, people say: "A fool can ask more questions than a thousand wise men can answer." Instead of "fool," we ought to say "every child."

ON THOSE WHO OFFEND YOU

MASHA, *a girl of ten*; VANIA, *a boy of eight*.

MASHA.

What I wish is that mother would come home at once and take us shopping, and then to call on Nastia. What would you like to happen now?

VANIA.

I? I wish something would happen like it did yesterday.

MASHA.

What happened yesterday? You mean when Grisha hit you and you both began to cry? There wasn't much good in that.

VANIA.

That's just what was beautiful. Nothing could have been more so. That's what I want to happen again.

MASHA.

I don't understand.

VANIA.

Well, I will explain what I want. Do you remember last Sunday, Uncle P.—you know how I love him. . . .

MASHA.

Who wouldn't. Mother says he is a saint; and it's true.

VANIA.

Well, you remember he told us a story last Sunday about a man whom people used to insult. The more any one insulted him the more he loved the offender. They abused him, and he praised them. They hit him and he helped them. Uncle said that anybody who acts so feels very happy. I liked what he said, and I wanted to be like that man. So, when Grisha hit me yesterday, I remembered my wish and kissed Grisha. He burst out crying. I felt very happy. But with nurse yesterday it was different; she began scolding me, and I quite forgot how I ought to have behaved, and I answered her very rudely. What I wish now is to have the same experience over again that I had with Grisha.

MASHA.

Then you would like somebody to strike you?

VANIA.

I would like it awfully. I would immediately do what I did to Grisha, and I would be so glad.

MASHA.

How stupid! Just like the fool you've always been.

VANIA.

I don't mind being a fool. I only know now what to do, so as to feel happy all the time.

MASHA.

A regular fool! Do you really feel happy, doing so?

VANIA.

Just awfully happy!

ON THE PRESS

The schoolroom at home.

(VOLODIA, a schoolboy of fourteen, is reading; SONIA, a girl of fifteen, is writing. The YARD-PORTER enters, carrying a heavy load on his back; MISHA, a boy of eight, following him.)

PORTER.

Where am I to put that bundle, sir? My shoulders are bent down with the weight of it.

VOLODIA.

Where were you told to put it?

PORTER.

Vasily Timofeëvich told me to carry it to the schoolroom and leave it for him.

VOLODIA.

Then put it in the corner.

(PORTER unloads the bundle and sighs heavily.)

SONIA.

What is it?

VOLODIA.

"Truth"—a paper.

MISHA.

"Truth"? What do you mean?

SONIA.

Why have you so many?

VOLODIA.

It is a collection of the whole year's issues.

(Continues reading.)

MISHA.

Has all this been written?

PORTER.

The fellows who wrote it weren't very lazy, I'll bet.

VOLODIA.

(laughs.) What did you say?

PORTER.

I said what I meant. It wasn't a lazy lot that wrote all that. Well, I'm going. Will you kindly say I have brought the bundle. *(Exit.)*

SONIA.

(to VOLODIA.) What does father want all those papers for?

VOLODIA.

He wants to collect Bolchakov's articles from them.

SONIA.

And Uncle Michael Ivanovich says reading Bolchakov makes him ill.

VOLODIA.

Just like Uncle Michael Ivanovich. He only reads "Truth for All."

MISHA.

And is uncle's "Truth " as big as this?

SONIA.

Bigger. But this is only for one year, and the papers have been published twenty years or more.

MISHA.

That makes twenty such bundles and another twenty more.

SONIA.

(*wishing to mystify* MISHA.) That's nothing. These are only two papers, and besides there are at least thirty more.

VOLODIA.

(*without raising his head.*) Thirty, you say! There are five hundred and thirty in Russia alone. And with those published abroad there are thousands altogether.

MISHA.

They couldn't all be put into this room.

VOLODIA.

Not even in this whole street. But please don't disturb me in my work. To-morrow teacher is sure to call upon me, and you don't give me a chance of learning my lessons with your silly talk.

(Resumes his reading.)

MISHA.

I don't think there's any use writing so much.

SONIA.

Why not?

MISHA.

Because if what they write is true, then why say the same thing over and over again? If it isn't, then why say what is not true?

SONIA.

An excellent judgment!

MISHA.

Why do they write such an awful lot?

VOLODIA.

(without taking his eyes off his book.) Because if it wasn't for the freedom of the press, how would people know what the truth is?

MISHA.

Father says the "Truth" contains the truth, and Uncle Michael Ivanovich says "Truth" makes him ill. Then how do they know where the truth really is — in "Truth" or in "Truth for All"?

SONIA.

I think you are right. There are really too many papers and magazines and books.

VOLODIA.

Just like a woman: perfectly senseless in every conclusion!

SONIA.

I only mean that when there is so much written it is impossible to know anything really.

VOLODIA.

But everybody has brains given him to find out where the truth is.

MISHA.

Then if everybody has got brains he can reason things out for himself.

VOLODIA.

So that's how you reason with your large supply of brains! Please go somewhere else and leave me alone to work.

ON REPENTANCE

VOLIA, a boy of eight, stands in the passage with an empty plate and cries. FEDIA, a boy of ten, comes running into the passage.

FEDIA.

Mother sent me to see where you were; but what are you crying for? Have you brought nurse . . . (*Sees the empty plate, and whistles.*) Where is the cake?

VOLIA.

I — I — I wanted it, I — (*and then suddenly*) — Boo-hoo-hoo! All of a sudden I ate it up — without meaning to.

FEDIA.

Instead of taking it to nurse, you have eaten it yourself on the way! Well I never! Mother thought you wanted nurse to have the cake.

VOLIA.

I did (*and then suddenly, without meaning to*). — Boo-hoo-hoo!

FEDIA.

You just tasted it, and then you ate the whole of it. Well, I never! (*Laughs.*)

VOLIA.

It is all very well for you to laugh, but how am I going to tell. . . . Now I can't go to nurse — or to mother either.

FEDIA.

A nice mess you have made of it, I must say. Ha, ha! So you have eaten the whole cake? It is no use crying. Just try to think of some way of getting out of it.

VOLIA.

I can't see how I can. What shall I do?

FEDIA.

Fancy that! (*Trying to restrain himself from laughing. A pause.*)

VOLIA.

What am I to do now? I am lost. (*Howls.*)

FEDIA.

Don't you care. Stop that howling. Simply go to mother and tell her you have eaten the cake yourself.

VOLIA.

That is worse.

FEDIA.

Then go and confess to nurse.

VOLIA.

How can I?

FEDIA.

Listen; you wait here. I will find nurse and tell her. She won't mind.

VOLIA.

No, don't. I cannot let her know about it.

FEDIA.

Nonsense. You did it by mistake; it can't be helped. I will tell her in a minute. (*Runs away.*)

VOLIA.

Fedia, Fedia, wait! He is gone — I just tasted it, and then I don't remember how I did it. What am I to do now! (*Sobbing.*)

FEDIA.

(*comes running back.*) Stop your bawling, I say. I told you nurse would forgive you. She only said, "Oh, the darling!"

VOLIA.

She is not cross with me?

FEDIA.

Not a bit. She said, "I don't care for the cake; I would have given it to him anyhow."

VOLIA.

But I didn't mean to eat it. (*Cries again.*)

FEDIA.

Why are you crying again? We won't tell mother. Nurse has quite forgiven you.

VOLIA.

Nurse has forgiven me. I know she is kind and good. But me, I am a wicked boy, and that's what makes me cry.

ON ART

FOOTMAN; HOUSEKEEPER; NATASHA (*a little girl.*)

FOOTMAN.

(*with a tray.*) Almond milk for the tea, and rum —

HOUSEKEEPER.

(*knitting a stocking and counting the stitches.*)
Twenty-three, twenty-four —

FOOTMAN.

I say, Avdotia Vasilievna, can't you hear?

HOUSEKEEPER.

I hear, I hear. I'll give it to you presently. I can't tear myself to pieces to do all kinds of work at the same moment. (*To NATASHA.*) Yes, darling; I will bring you the prunes presently. Just wait a moment, till I have given him the milk. (*Strains the almond milk.*)

FOOTMAN.

(*sitting down.*) I tell you I have seen something

to-night. To think that they pay good money for that!

HOUSEKEEPER.

Oh, you have been to the theatre. You were out late to-night.

FOOTMAN.

An opera is always a long affair. I have always to wait hours and hours. To-night they were kind, and let me in to see the performance.

(The kitchen-maid, the manservant PAVEL enters with the cream and stands listening.)

HOUSEKEEPER.

Then there was singing to-night?

FOOTMAN.

Singing — humph! Just silly, loud screaming, not a bit like real singing. “I,” he said — “I love her so much.” And he puts it all to a tune, and it is not like anything under heaven. Then they had a row, and ought to have fought it out; but they started singing instead.

HOUSEKEEPER.

And yet I’ve heard it costs a lot to get seats for the season.

FOOTMAN.

Our box cost three hundred roubles for twelve nights.

PAVEL.

(*shaking his head.*) Three hundred! And who does that money go to?

FOOTMAN.

Why, the people who sing are paid for it. I was told a lady singer makes fifty thousand a year.

PAVEL.

You talk of thousands — why, three hundred is a pile of money in the country. Some folks toil their whole life long, and can't even get together one hundred.

(NINA, a schoolgirl, enters the servants' pantry.)

NINA.

Is Natasha here? Why don't you come? Mother wants you.

NATASHA.

(*munching a prune.*) I am coming.

NINA.

(*to PAVEL.*) What were you saying about a hundred roubles?

HOUSEKEEPER.

Simeon (*pointing to the footman*) was just telling us about the singing he listened to to-night in the theatre, and about the lady singers being paid such a lot of money. That's what made Pavel wonder. Is that really true, Nina Mikhailovna, that a lady may get fifty thousand for her singing?

NINA.

More than that. A lady has been engaged to sing in America for a hundred and fifty thousand roubles. But even better than that, yesterday's paper says a musician has been paid fifty thousand roubles for his finger-nail.

PAVEL.

The papers write all sorts of nonsense. That couldn't be. How could he be paid that?

NINA.

(*evidently pleased.*) He was, I tell you.

PAVEL.

Just for a finger-nail?

NATASHA.

How is that possible?

NINA.

He was a pianist, and was insured for that amount in case anything happened to his hand, and he couldn't go on playing the piano.

PAVEL.

Well, I'll be blowed!

SENICHKA.

(*a schoolboy in the upper class of the school, entering the pantry.*) You've got a regular meeting here. What is it all about?

(*NINA tells him what they have been talking about.*)

SENICHKA.

(*with still more complacency than NINA.*) That story of the nail is nothing at all. Why, a dancer in Paris had her foot insured for two hundred thousand roubles, in case she sprained it and was not able to go on dancing.

FOOTMAN.

That's them girls — excuse me for mentioning it — that work with their legs without any stockings on.

PAVEL.

You call that work! And they are paid for it!

SENICHKA.

But every one cannot do that kind of work — and she had to study a good many years.

PAVEL.

What did she study that did any good? Mere hopping about?

SENICHKA.

You don't understand. Art is a great thing.

PAVEL.

I think it is all nonsense. People spend money like that because they have such an easy time. If they had to bend their backs as we do to make a living, there wouldn't be all these singing and dancing girls. They ain't worth anything — but what is the use of saying so?

SENICHKA.

There we have the outcome of ignorance. To him Beethoven and Viardot and Rafael are utter folly.

NATASHA.

Well, I think what he says is so.

NINA.

Come, let's go.

ON SCIENCE

Two schoolboys, one a pupil of the real gymnasium and the other of the classical gymnasium; two twins, brothers of the latter; VOLODIA and PETRUSHA, eight years of age.*

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

What do I want with Latin and Greek, when everything of any value has been translated into the modern languages?

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

You will never understand the *Iliad* unless you read it in Greek.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

But I don't see the use of reading it. I don't want to.

VOLODIA.

What is the *Iliad*?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

A story.

* A school for natural science without Greek and Latin; in the classical gymnasium Latin and Greek are taught.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Yes, a story, but one that has not its equal in the world.

PETRUSHA.

What is it that makes the story so particularly good?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Nothing. It is just a story, and nothing else.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Yes; but you cannot really understand antiquity without a knowledge of this story.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

I consider that a superstition just like religious instruction.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

(*getting excited.*) Religious instruction is nothing but lies and nonsense, while this is history and wisdom.

VOLODIA.

Is religious instruction all nonsense?

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Why do you sit there listening to our talk? You can't understand.

BOTH BOYS.

(*hurt.*) Why shouldn't we?

VOLODIA.

Perhaps we understand things better than you do.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

Very well. Just be quiet, and don't interrupt. (*To the SCIENCE SCHOLAR.*) You say Latin and Greek is of no use in life: but that applies as well to bacteriology, to chemistry, to physics, and astronomy. Why is it necessary to know anything about the distance of the stars, about their size, and all those unnecessary details?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Unnecessary? On the contrary, they are very necessary indeed.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

What for?

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Why, for everything. Take navigation. You would think that had not much to do with astronomy. But look at the practical results of science — the way it is applied to agriculture, to medicine, to the industries —

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

On the other hand, it is used also in making bombs, for purposes of war, and for revolutionary

objects as well. If science contributed to the moral improvement, then —

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

But what about your sort of knowledge? Does that raise the moral standard?

VOLODIA.

Is there any science that makes people better?

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

I told you not to interfere in the discussions of grown-up people. You say nothing but silly things.

VOLODIA *and* PETRUSHA.

(*with one voice.*) Not so silly as you imagine. . . . Just tell us which science teaches people how to be good.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

There isn't such a science. Everybody has to find that out for himself.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

What is the use of talking to them? They don't understand.

SCIENCE SCHOLAR.

Why not? They might. How to be good, Volodia and Petrusha, is not taught in schools.

VOLODIA.

Well, if that is not taught, it is no use going to school.

PETRUSHA.

When we are grown up we will not learn useless things.

VOLODIA.

As for the right way to live, we'll do that better than you.

CLASSICAL SCHOLAR.

(*laughing.*) Oh, the wisdom of that conclusion!

ON GOING TO LAW

A PEASANT, HIS WIFE, A KINSWOMAN, FEDIA,
the peasant's son, a lad of nineteen. PETKA, *another son, a boy of nine.*

FATHER.

(entering the cottage and taking off his cloak.)
What beastly weather! I could hardly manage to get home.

MOTHER.

And such a long way for you. It must be nearly fifteen miles.

FATHER.

Not less than twenty, I can tell you. *(To his son, FEDIA.)* Take the colt to the stable.

MOTHER.

Well, have we won?

PEASANT.

We have not, damn it all. It will never come right.

KINSWOMAN.

But what is it all about, cousin? I don't quite understand.

PEASANT.

It is simply that Averian has taken possession of my vegetable garden and is holding it. And I can't get at him in the right way.

WIFE.

That lawsuit has been dragging along over a year now.

KINSWOMAN.

I know, I know. I remember as far back as Lent, when the matter was before the village court. My man told me it had been settled in your favour.

PEASANT.

That finished it, didn't it? But Averian appealed to the head of the Zemstvo,* and he had the whole business gone into again. I then appealed to the judge and won. That ought to have been the end of it. But it wasn't. After that he won. Nice sort of judges they are!

WIFE.

What are we to do now?

* County council.

PEASANT.

I won't stand his having my property. I will appeal to the higher court, I have already had a talk with a lawyer.

KINSWOMAN.

But suppose they take his side in the upper court?

PEASANT.

Then I'll go to the Supreme Court. I'll sell my last cow before I'll give in to that fat hound. I'll teach him a lesson.

KINSWOMAN.

A lot of trouble comes from these trials, a lot of trouble, I declare! And suppose he wins again?

PEASANT.

Then I'll appeal to the Tsar. Now I had better go out and give the pony some hay. (*Exit.*)

PETKA.

Why do they judge like that, some saying Averian is right and some daddy?

MOTHER.

Probably because they don't know who is right themselves.

PETKA.

Then why ask them, if they don't know?

MOTHER.

Because nobody wants to give up his property.

PETKA.

When I grow up, I will do like this: If I have a dispute with somebody, we will cast lots and see who wins. And that will settle it. We always settle it this way with Akulika.

KINSWOMAN.

Don't you think, cousin, that is quite a good way? One sin less, anyhow.

MOTHER.

Quite so. What a lot we have spent on that trial! More than the whole vegetable garden is worth. Oh, it is a sin, a great sin!

ON THE CRIMINAL COURT

Children: GRISHKA, SEMKA, JISHKA.

JISHKA.

Serves him right. Why did he make his way into another person's corn loft? When he is put in prison that will teach him not to do it another time.

SEMKA.

Of course if he has really done it. But old Mikita said Mitrofan was run into prison without being guilty.

JISHKA.

Without being guilty? And won't anything happen to the man who judged him falsely?

GRISHKA.

Well, they won't pat him on the head for it, of course. If he hasn't judged according to law he will be punished too.

SEMKA.

Who will punish him?

JISHKA.

Those above him.

SEMKA.

Who are above him?

GRISHKA.

His superiors.

JISHKA.

And if the superiors also make a mistake?

GRISHKA.

There are higher powers above them, and they will be punished by these. That's what the Tsar is for.

JISHKA.

But if the Tsar judges wrong, who is going to punish him?

GRISHKA.

Who? Why do you ask that? Don't you know?

SEMKA.

God will punish him.

JISHKA.

God will also punish him who stole the corn from the loft. Then why not leave it to God to

punish those who are guilty? He will not judge wrong.

GRISHKA.

It's clear that that is not possible.

JISHKA.

Why not?

GRISHKA.

Because . . .

ON PROPERTY

An old carpenter is mending the railings on a veranda. A boy of seven, the son of the master of the house, is watching the man working.

BOY.

How well you work! What is your name?

CARPENTER.

My name? They used to call me Hrolka, and now they call me Hrol, and even Hrol Savich* when they speak respectfully.

BOY.

How well you work, Frol Savich.

CARPENTER.

As long as you have to work, you may as well do good work.

BOY.

Have you got a veranda in your house?

* The name is *Frol*, but the common way of the ignorant masses is to use *H*, instead of *F*. It is as if one said Johnny then John and then John Smith.

CARPENTER.

In our house? We have a veranda, my boy, yours here is nothing to compare with it. A veranda with no windows. And if you step on to it, well, you can't believe your eyes. That's the kind of veranda we've got.

BOY.

You are making fun. No, seriously, tell me: have you a veranda like this? I want to know.

CARPENTER.

My dear child, how can the likes of us have a veranda? It's a blessing if we've a roof over our heads, and you say, "a veranda!" I've been thinking about having a roof built ever since last spring. I've just managed to pull down the old one, but the new one isn't finished, and the house is standing there and getting damp without it.

BOY.

(*surprised.*) But why?

CARPENTER.

Why? Just because I am not able to do it.

BOY.

How so? If you are able to work for us?

CARPENTER.

I can work all right for you, but not for myself.

BOY.

Why? I can't understand. Please explain.

CARPENTER.

You will understand when you are grown up. I am able to do your work, but as for my own, I can't do it.

BOY.

But why?

CARPENTER.

Because I need wood for that, and I haven't got any. It has to be bought. I have nothing to buy it with. When I have finished my work here, and your mother pays me, just you tell her to pay me well. Then I'll drive to the forest, get five ash-trees or so to bring home and finish my roof.

BOY.

Do you mean you haven't a forest of your own?

CARPENTER.

We have such big forests that you can walk three whole days and not reach the end. But, worse luck, they don't belong to us.

BOY.

Mother says all her trouble comes from our forest; she has continual worries about it.

CARPENTER.

That's the worst of it. Your mother is worried by having too much wood, and I'm worried by having none at all. But here I am gabbling with you and forgetting my work. And the likes of us don't get made much of for doing that.

(Resumes his work.)

BOY.

When I grow up I shall arrange to have just the same as everybody else, so that all of us are equal.

CARPENTER.

Mind you grow up quickly, that I may still be alive. Then, mind you, don't forget. . . . Where have I put my plane?

ON CHILDREN

A LADY with her children — a SCHOOLBOY of fourteen, a girl of five, JANICHKA, are walking in the garden. An OLD PEASANT WOMAN approaches them.

LADY.

What do you want, Matresha?

OLD WOMAN.

I have come again to ask a favour of your ladyship.

LADY.

What is it?

OLD WOMAN.

I am simply ashamed to speak, your ladyship, but that don't help. My daughter, the one for whom you stood godmother, has got another baby. God has given her a boy this time. She sent me to ask your ladyship if you would do her a favour, and have the child christened into our Orthodox faith.*

* When a lady in Russia stands godmother she gives the christening robes and a dress to the mother. The godfather pays the priest and gives his godchild a cross.

LADY.

But didn't she have a child very recently?

OLD WOMAN.

Well, that's just as you think. A year ago in Lent.

LADY.

How many grandchildren have you got now?

OLD WOMAN.

I could hardly tell you, dear lady. All of them are still babes. Such a misfortune!

LADY.

How many children has your daughter?

OLD WOMAN.

This is the seventh child, your ladyship, and all alive. I wish God had taken some back to Him.

LADY.

How can you speak like that?

OLD WOMAN.

I can't help it. That's how one comes to sin. But then our misery is so great. Well, your ladyship, are you willing to help us, and stand god-mother to the child? Believe me, on my soul,

lady, we have not even got anything to pay the priest; bread itself is scarce in the house. All the children are small. My son-in-law is working away from home, and I am alone with my daughter. I am old, and she is expecting or nursing the whole time, and what work can you ask her to do with all that? So it is me that has to do everything. And that hungry lot all the while asking for food.

LADY.

Are there really seven children?

OLD WOMAN.

Seven, your ladyship, sure. Just the eldest girl begins to help a bit; all the rest are little.

LADY.

But why do they have such a lot of children?

OLD WOMAN.

How can one help that, dear lady? He comes now and then for a short stay, or just for a feast day. They are young, and he lives near in town. I wish he had to go somewhere far away.

LADY.

That's the way! Some people are sad because

they have no children, or their children die, and you complain of having too many.

OLD WOMAN.

They are too many. We have not the means to keep them. Well, your ladyship, may I cheer her up with your consent?

LADY.

Well, I will stand godmother to this one like the others. It is a boy, you say?

OLD WOMAN.

It's a small baby, but very strong; he's got good lungs. What day do you order the christening to be?

LADY.

Whenever you like.

(OLD WOMAN *thanks her and goes.*)

JANICHKA.

Mother, why is it that some people have children and some have not? You have, Matresha, has, but Parasha hasn't any.

LADY.

Parasha is not married. People have children when they are married. They marry, become husband and wife, and then only children come.

JANICHKA.

Do they always get children then?

LADY.

No, not always. Our cook has a wife, but they have no children.

JANICHKA.

Couldn't it be arranged that only those who want children should have them, and those who don't want them should have none?

SCHOOLBOY.

What nonsense you talk!

JANICHKA.

That is not nonsense at all. I only thought that if Matresha's daughter doesn't want to have children, it ought to be arranged so that she shouldn't have any. Couldn't it be arranged, mother?

SCHOOLBOY.

Have I not told you not to talk nonsense about things you know nothing about?

JANICHKA.

Mother, could it be arranged as I say?

LADY.

I don't know: we never know about that. It all depends on the will of God.

afraid of it before. And now I don't mind. I only wish it to come quicker."

XVI

IN the meanwhile, the affairs of Eugene Mihailovich had grown worse and worse. Business was very slack. There was a new shop in the town; he was losing his customers, and the interest had to be paid. He borrowed again on interest. At last his shop and his goods were to be sold up. Eugene Mihailovich and his wife applied to every one they knew, but they could not raise the four hundred roubles they needed to save the shop anywhere.

They had some hope of the merchant Krasnopuzov, Eugene Mihailovich's wife being on good terms with his mistress. But news came that Krasnopuzov had been robbed of a huge sum of money. Some said of half a million roubles. "And do you know who is said to be the thief?" said Eugene Mihailovich to his wife. "Vassily, our former yard-porter. They say he is squandering the money, and the police are bribed by him."

"I knew he was a villain. You remember how he did not mind perjuring himself? But I did not expect it would go so far."

"I hear he has recently been in the courtyard of our house. Cook says she is sure it was he. She told me he helps poor girls to get married."

"They always invent tales. I don't believe it."

At that moment a strange man, shabbily dressed, entered the shop.

"What is it you want?"

"Here is a letter for you."

"From whom?"

"You will see yourself."

"Don't you require an answer? Wait a moment."

"I cannot." The strange man handed the letter and disappeared.

"How extraordinary!" said Eugene Mihailovich, and tore open the envelope. To his great amazement several hundred rouble notes fell out. "Four hundred roubles!" he exclaimed, hardly believing his eyes. "What does it mean?"

The envelope also contained a badly-spelt letter, addressed to Eugene Mihailovich. "It is said in the Gospels," ran the letter, "do good for evil. You have done me much harm; and in the coupon case you made me wrong the peasants greatly. But I have pity for you. Here are four hundred notes. Take them, and remember your porter Vassily."

"Very extraordinary!" said Eugene Mihailovich to his wife and to himself. And each time he remembered that incident, or spoke about it to his wife, tears would come to his eyes.

XVII

FOURTEEN priests were kept in the Suzdal friary prison, chiefly for having been untrue to the orthodox faith. Isidor had been sent to that place also. Father Missael received him according to the instructions he had been given, and without talking to him ordered him to be put into a separate cell as a serious criminal. After a fortnight Father Missael, making a round of the prison, entered Isidor's cell, and asked him whether there was anything he wished for.

"There is a great deal I wish for," answered Isidor; "but I cannot tell you what it is in the presence of anybody else. Let me talk to you privately."

They looked at each other, and Missael saw he had nothing to be afraid of in remaining alone with Isidor. He ordered Isidor to be brought into his own room, and when they were alone, he said,—

"Well, now you can speak."

Isidor fell on his knees.

"Brother," said Isidor. "What are you doing to yourself! Have mercy on your own soul. You are the worst villain in the world. You have offended against all that is sacred . . ."

A month after Missael sent a report, asking that Isidor should be released as he had repented, and he also asked for the release of the rest of the prisoners. After which he resigned his post.

XVIII

TEN years passed. Mitia Smokovnikov had finished his studies in the Technical College; he was now an engineer in the gold mines in Siberia, and was very highly paid. One day he was about to make a round in the district. The governor offered him a convict, Stepan Pelageushkine, to accompany him on his journey.

"A convict, you say? But is not that dangerous?"

"Not if it is this one. He is a holy man. You may ask anybody, they will all tell you so."

"Why has he been sent here?"

The governor smiled. "He had committed six murders, and yet he is a holy man. I go bail for him."

Mitia Smokovnikov took Stepan, now a bald-

headed, lean, tanned man, with him on his journey. On their way Stepan took care of Smokovnikov like his own child, and told him his story; told him why he had been sent here, and what now filled his life.

And, strange to say, Mitia Smokovnikov, who up to that time used to spend his time drinking, eating, and gambling, began for the first time to meditate on life. These thoughts never left him now, and produced a complete change in his habits. After a time he was offered a very advantageous position. He refused it, and made up his mind to buy an estate with the money he had, to marry, and to devote himself to the peasantry, helping them as much as he could.

XIX

HE carried out his intentions. But before retiring to his estate he called on his father, with whom he had been on bad terms, and who had settled apart with his new family. Mitia Smokovnikov wanted to make it up. The old man wondered at first, and laughed at the change he noticed in his son; but after a while he ceased to find fault with him, and thought of the many times when it was he who was the guilty one.

AFTER THE DANCE

AFTER THE DANCE

“— AND you say that a man cannot, of himself, understand what is good and evil; that it is all environment, that the environment swamps the man. But I believe it is all chance. Take my own case . . .”

Thus spoke our excellent friend, Ivan Vasilievich, after a conversation between us on the impossibility of improving individual character without a change of the conditions under which men live. Nobody had actually said that one could not of oneself understand good and evil; but it was a habit of Ivan Vasilievich to answer in this way the thoughts aroused in his own mind by conversation, and to illustrate those thoughts by relating incidents in his own life. He often quite forgot the reason for his story in telling it; but he always told it with great sincerity and feeling.

He did so now.

“Take my own case. My whole life was moulded, not by environment, but by something quite different.”

“By what, then?” we asked.

“Oh, that is a long story. I should have to

tell you about a great many things to make you understand."

"Well, tell us then."

Ivan Vasilievich thought a little, and shook his head.

"My whole life," he said, "was changed in one night, or, rather, morning."

"Why, what happened?" one of us asked.

"What happened was that I was very much in love. I have been in love many times, but this was the most serious of all. It is a thing of the past; she has married daughters now. It was Varinka B——." Ivan Vasilievich mentioned her surname. "Even at fifty she is remarkably handsome; but in her youth, at eighteen, she was exquisite — tall, slender, graceful, and stately. Yes, stately is the word; she held herself very erect, by instinct as it were; and carried her head high, and that together with her beauty and height gave her a queenly air in spite of being thin, even bony one might say. It might indeed have been deterring had it not been for her smile, which was always gay and cordial, and for the charming light in her eyes and for her youthful sweetness."

"What an entrancing description you give, Ivan Vasilievich!"

"Description, indeed! I could not possibly describe her so that you could appreciate her. But

that does not matter; what I am going to tell you happened in the forties. I was at that time a student in a provincial university. I don't know whether it was a good thing or no, but we had no political clubs, no theories in our universities then. We were simply young and spent our time as young men do, studying and amusing ourselves. I was a very gay, lively, careless fellow, and had plenty of money too. I had a fine horse, and used to go tobogganing with the young ladies. Skating had not yet come into fashion. I went to drinking parties with my comrades—in those days we drank nothing but champagne—if we had no champagne we drank nothing at all. We never drank vodka, as they do now. Evening parties and balls were my favourite amusements. I danced well, and was not an ugly fellow."

"Come, there is no need to be modest," interrupted a lady near him. "We have seen your photograph. Not ugly, indeed! You were a handsome fellow."

"Handsome, if you like. That does not matter. When my love for her was at its strongest, on the last day of the carnival, I was at a ball at the provincial marshal's, a good-natured old man, rich and hospitable, and a court chamberlain. The guests were welcomed by his wife, who was as good-natured as himself. She was dressed in

puce-coloured velvet, and had a diamond diadem on her forehead, and her plump, old white shoulders and bosom were bare like the portraits of Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great.

“It was a delightful ball. It was a splendid room, with a gallery for the orchestra, which was famous at the time, and consisted of serfs belonging to a musical landowner. The refreshments were magnificent, and the champagne flowed in rivers. Though I was fond of champagne I did not drink that night, because without it I was drunk with love. But I made up for it by dancing waltzes and polkas till I was ready to drop — of course, whenever possible, with Varinka. She wore a white dress with a pink sash, white shoes, and white kid gloves, which did not quite reach to her thin pointed elbows. A disgusting engineer named Anisimov robbed me of the mazurka with her — to this day I cannot forgive him. He asked her for the dance the minute she arrived, while I had driven to the hair-dresser’s to get a pair of gloves, and was late. So I did not dance the mazurka with her, but with a German girl to whom I had previously paid a little attention; but I am afraid I did not behave very politely to her that evening. I hardly spoke or looked at her, and saw nothing but the tall, slender figure in a white dress,



Alexander the First.

with a pink sash, a flushed, beaming, dimpled face, and sweet, kind eyes. I was not alone; they were all looking at her with admiration, the men and women alike, although she outshone all of them. They could not help admiring her.

"Although I was not nominally her partner for the mazurka, I did as a matter of fact dance nearly the whole time with her. She always came forward boldly the whole length of the room to pick me out. I flew to meet her without waiting to be chosen, and she thanked me with a smile for my intuition. When I was brought up to her with somebody else, and she guessed wrongly, she took the other man's hand with a shrug of her slim shoulders, and smiled at me regretfully.

"Whenever there was a waltz figure in the mazurka, I waltzed with her for a long time, and breathing fast and smiling, she would say, '*Encore*'; and I went on waltzing and waltzing, as though unconscious of any bodily existence."

"Come now, how could you be unconscious of it with your arm round her waist? You must have been conscious, not only of your own existence, but of hers," said one of the party.

Ivan Vasilievich cried out, almost shouting in anger: "There you are, moderns all over! Nowadays you think of nothing but the body. It was different in our day. The more I was in love the

less corporeal was she in my eyes. Nowadays you think of nothing but the body. It was different in our day. The more I was in love the less corporeal was she in my eyes. Nowadays you see legs, ankles, and I don't know what. You undress the women you are in love with. In my eyes, as Alphonse Karr said — and he was a good writer — ‘the one I loved was always draped in robes of bronze.’ We never thought of doing so; we tried to veil her nakedness, like Noah's good-natured son. Oh, well, you can't understand.”

“Don't pay any attention to him. Go on,” said one of them.

“Well, I danced for the most part with her, and did not notice how time was passing. The musicians kept playing the same mazurka tunes over and over again in desperate exhaustion — you know what it is towards the end of a ball. Papas and mammas were already getting up from the card-tables in the drawing-room in expectation of supper, the men-servants were running to and fro bringing in things. It was nearly three o'clock. I had to make the most of the last minutes. I chose her again for the mazurka, and for the hundredth time we danced across the room.

“‘The quadrille after supper is mine,’ I said, taking her to her place.

“ ‘Of course, if I am not carried off home,’ she said, with a smile.

“ ‘I won’t give you up,’ I said.

“ ‘Give me my fan, anyhow,’ she answered.

“ ‘I am so sorry to part with it,’ I said, handing her a cheap white fan.

“ ‘Well, here’s something to console you,’ she said, plucking a feather out of the fan, and giving it to me.

“ ‘I took the feather, and could only express my rapture and gratitude with my eyes. I was not only pleased and gay, I was happy, delighted; I was good, I was not myself but some being not of this earth, knowing nothing of evil. I hid the feather in my glove, and stood there unable to tear myself away from her.

“ ‘Look, they are urging father to dance,’ she said to me, pointing to the tall, stately figure of her father, a colonel with silver epaulettes, who was standing in the doorway with some ladies.

“ ‘Varinka, come here!’ exclaimed our hostess, the lady with the diamond *ferronnière* and with shoulders like Elizabeth, in a loud voice.

“ ‘Varinka went to the door, and I followed her.

“ ‘Persuade your father to dance the mazurka with you, *ma chère*.—Do, please, Peter Valdislavovich,’ she said, turning to the colonel.

“ ‘Varinka’s father was a very handsome, well-

preserved old man. He had a good colour, moustaches curled in the style of Nicolas I., and white whiskers which met the moustaches. His hair was combed on to his forehead, and a bright smile, like his daughter's, was on his lips and in his eyes. He was splendidly set up, with a broad military chest, on which he wore some decorations, and he had powerful shoulders and long slim legs. He was that ultra-military type produced by the discipline of Emperor Nicolas I.

"When we approached the door the colonel was just refusing to dance, saying that he had quite forgotten how; but at that instant he smiled, swung his arm gracefully around to the left, drew his sword from its sheath, handed it to an obliging young man who stood near, and smoothed his suède glove on his right hand.

"'Everything must be done according to rule,' he said with a smile. He took the hand of his daughter, and stood one-quarter turned, waiting for the music.

"At the first sound of the mazurka, he stamped one foot smartly, threw the other forward, and, at first slowly and smoothly, then buoyantly and impetuously, with stamping of feet and clicking of boots, his tall, imposing figure moved the length of the room. Varinka swayed gracefully beside him, rhythmically and easily, making her steps

help, I prayed to the God of the Orthodox Church; then I turned to the Catholic; then to the Protestant with Parrot; then to the god of the Mystics with Krudener; but I only prayed that others might see and be filled with admiration of me. I used to despise everybody, yet the opinion of the very people I despised was the one thing of importance to me — the only thing for which I lived, and which guided all my actions. It was terrible to be left alone. Still more terrible to be alone with her — with my wife. Consumptive, narrow-minded, deceitful, capricious, spiteful, hypocritical, she did more to poison my life than anything else. *Nous étions censés* to spend our new *lune de miel*, a very hell clothed in decent garb, too horrible to think of.

I felt particularly wretched on one occasion. I had received a letter from Arakcheev the night before, in which he informed me about the assassination of his mistress, and spoke of his utter grief and despair. Strange to say, in spite of his constant subtle flattery, I liked him. It was not altogether flattery, perhaps, but a real dog-like devotion, which began even in my father's time, when we both took the oath of allegiance to him unknown to my grandmother. This devotion of his made me love him — if I loved any man at that time — although the word love can hardly be used

in connection with such a monster. What drew me to him particularly was the fact that not only had he no hand in my father's death, as so many others had who became hateful to me afterwards as accomplices in my crime, but he had been devoted alike to him and to me. However, of this later.

Strange to say, the murder of the beautiful, wicked Nastasia — she was a sensuous beauty — had the effect of arousing all my desires so that I could not sleep the whole night. The fact that my consumptive wife, whom I loathed, was lying in the room next but one to me, coupled with thoughts of Mary Narishkin, who had thrown me over for an insignificant diplomat, vexed and tormented me still more. Both my father and I seemed to have been doomed to be jealous of the Gagarins. But I was carried away again. I could not sleep the whole of that night. With the first signs of dawn I pulled up my blind, slipped on a white dressing-gown, and rang for my valet. Every one was still asleep. I dressed, put on a civilian overcoat and cap, and went out past the sentinels into the street.

It was a cool, autumn morning, the sun was just rising over the sea. I felt revived in the fresh air, and my depressing thoughts left me. I turned my steps towards the sea. The first rays of the

rising sun were dancing about on its surface. I had barely reached the green-coloured house at the corner when I was attracted by sounds of drumming and piping from the square. I listened for a moment, and guessed that a punishment was going on, that some one was running the gauntlet. I had frequently sanctioned this form of punishment, but had never seen it before. All at once, as though at the instigation of Satan himself, a picture rose up in my mind of the beautiful Nastasia who had been murdered, and of the soldier's body as it was being lashed with sticks, the two mingling together in one maddening sensation. I tried to recall this punishment in the Semijonov regiment, amongst the military settlers, hundreds of whom had been flogged to death in this way, and was suddenly seized by an overwhelming desire to witness this sight. As I was in civilian garb, it was quite possible for me to do so. The beating of the drum and the sound of the pipes grew louder as I drew nearer the square. Being short-sighted, I could not see very well without my glasses, but I could just make out a tall figure with a white back, marching along between two rows of soldiers. When I joined the crowd standing behind, I got out my glasses, and could see everything that was going on distinctly. A tall man with his bare arms tied to a bayonet, his bare

back — on which the blood was beginning to show itself — slightly bent, was walking down an avenue of soldiers armed with sticks. This man was the image of myself — my double! The same height, stooping shoulders, bald head, the same kind of whiskers without a moustache, the same cheek-bones, mouth, and blue eyes. But there was no smile on those lips that opened and contorted with pain at the blows, no tender, caressing expression in those eyes that protruded horribly, now closing, now opening.

I recognised him at once. It was Strumensky, a corporal in the third company of the Semijonov regiment, well known to the guards by his likeness to me. They used to call him Alexander II. in fun. I knew that he had been transferred to the garrison, together with some other rebels, and had most likely tried to escape or something of the sort, and having been caught, was undergoing punishment. I confirmed this afterwards. I stood as one petrified, gazing at the unfortunate man, as he was marching along under the blows. Suddenly I noticed that the crowd was staring at me, some people stepping aside, others approaching nearer. I had evidently been recognised; I turned my steps quickly homewards. The drumming and piping continued, so I gathered that the flogging was not yet over.

My first sensation on getting away was that my sympathies ought to be on the side of those who were inflicting the punishment; at any rate, that I ought to acknowledge that what they were doing was right, good, and necessary. But I could not do this, and was at the same time conscious that if I did not acknowledge it, I must admit that my whole life had been wrong from beginning to end, and that I ought to do what I had long ago wanted to do — throw up everything, go away, and disappear.

I was completely overwhelmed by this sensation. I tried to fight against it, now assuring myself that the thing was right, a grievous necessity that could not be dispensed with; now feeling that I ought to be in the unfortunate man's place. Strange to say, I did not pity the man in the least. Instead of doing anything to stop the proceeding, I hastened home merely to avoid recognition. Soon the drumming ceased, and the disturbing sensation somehow left me. I had some tea on reaching home, and received Volkonsky with his report. Then there was breakfast, the usual burdensome, insincere relations with my wife; then Dibich, and another report dealing with certain informations about a secret society. With God's grace I will deal with this more fully in its proper place. I will merely say now that I received the informa-

tion with outward composure. I continued in a more or less calm state until dinner came to an end, when I went into my study, lay down on the couch, and dozed off. I had scarcely been asleep for five minutes when I was suddenly awakened by a powerful shock. I distinctly heard the beating of the drum, the sound of the pipes and Strumensky's cries. I saw his agonised face, or mine — I was not quite sure which; whether it was Strumensky or myself — and the grim contorted faces of the soldiers and officers. I remained in this trance for a short time, and when I came to myself put on my hat and sword, and went out saying that I was going for a walk. I knew where the military hospital was situated, and directed my steps straight there. My appearance caused a great tumult as usual. The chief doctor and head of the staff came running up breathless. I told them that I wished to inspect the wards. On my round I caught sight of Strumensky's bald head in the second ward. He was lying face downwards, his head resting on his arm, moaning pitifully. "He's been punished for desertion," some one said to me.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, with my usual gesture of approval, and walked on.

The next day I sent a messenger to ask how he was, and learnt that he had received the sacrament and was dying.

It was my brother Michael's name-day; there was a special service and parade. I feigned to be unwell, as a result of my recent journey from the Crimea, and did not go to church. Dibich came again and continued his report about the conspiracy in the second army. He drew my attention to what Count Vitt had said before my Crimean visit, and to the information that had been received from Corporal Sherwood. Whilst listening to Dibich, and seeing the immense importance he attached to these plots and conspiracies, I was suddenly struck by the full significance of the revolution that had taken place within me. All these people were conspiring to change the form of government, to set up a constitution, the very thing I had myself wanted to do twenty years ago. I had made and unmade constitutions in Europe, but was there one soul the better for it? What right had I to take such a task upon myself? In reality external life, external affairs and participation in them were unimportant, unnecessary, and had nothing whatever to do with me. Had I not participated in them to the full, changed the fates of European nations? I suddenly realised that this did not concern me, that the only thing of importance to me, was myself — my soul. My former ideas about abdication came back to me with new force. This time it was without any affectation, without any desire to grieve others,

to astonish the world, or to add to my own aggrandisement — all the things that had prompted me formerly; but it was with a real sincerity, not for the sake of impressing others, but for myself — for the needs of my own soul. It seemed as if I had gone through my brilliant career (in the worldly sense of course), in order to return to that dream of my youth, which had reached me through penitence. I had come back to it with no feeling of vanity or desire for self glorification; it was for my true self alone, for God. In my youth the idea had not been quite clear to me, but now it seemed to me impossible to go on living as I had been doing. Nevertheless how could I escape? I no longer wished to astonish the world, but on the contrary wanted to go away quietly, unknown to any one — to go away and suffer. I was so filled with joy at the idea that I began considering ways and means of accomplishing it, and used all the resources of my mind and my peculiar subtleness to bring it about. Curiously enough it was not nearly so difficult as I had anticipated. My plan was to feign a dangerous illness, bribe the doctor, get Strumensky, who was dying, put in my place, and flee without disclosing my identity to any one.

Everything turned out favourably. On the 9th, by some peculiar fate, I fell ill of a fever. I

stayed in bed for about a week, during which time I considered my idea thoroughly, and became more confirmed in it. On the 16th I got up feeling quite well again.

I shaved as usual on that day and cut myself rather badly. I bled a great deal, and feeling faint dropped down on the floor. People came rushing in, and I was immediately raised. I could see at a glance that the incident might prove useful to my purpose, and though I had quite recovered, pretended to be very weak, and going back to bed and asked for Doctor Villier's assistant. I knew it would have been impossible to bribe Villier, but I had hopes of his assistant. I told him of my purpose and offered him eighty thousand roubles, if he would do everything I wanted of him.

I had hit on the following plan, having heard that Strumensky was not expected to live through the day, I pretended to be irritated and annoyed with everybody, and allowed no one to come near me except the young doctor, whom I had bribed. He was to bring Strumensky's body hidden in a bath, put him in my place, and announce my sudden death. It all happened as we had arranged it, and on the 7th day of November I was a free man.

Strumensky's body was buried in great state.

My brother Nicholas came to the throne, condemning the conspirators to hard labour. I met several of them later in Siberia. I have suffered very little in comparison to the enormity of my crime, and have enjoyed the greatest of all happiness. But I will speak of this in due course.

An old man of seventy-two, on the brink of the grave, fully realising the vanity of my former life and the deep significance of my present one as a wanderer, I will now endeavour to relate the whole story of the past.

II

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

December 12, 1849,
Near Krasnorechinsk, Siberia.

To-day is my birthday. I have reached my seventy-second year. Exactly seventy-two years ago I was born in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. My mother, the Empress, was then the Grand Duchess Maria Fedorovna.

I slept well last night, and feel better than I did yesterday. I have come out of my spiritual torpor and can turn once more to God. During the night I prayed in the darkness, and a consciousness came upon me that my one and only purpose in

life was to serve Him who had sent me into the world.

It is within my own power either to serve or not to serve Him. Serving Him I add to my own good and to the good of the whole world; not serving Him I forfeit my own good, and deprive the world of that good which was in my power to create; not, however, of its potential good. What I ought to have done, others will do after me, and His will shall be fulfilled. This is the meaning of free will. But if He knows everything that is to be, if all is ordained by Him, then how can there be free will? I do not know. This is the boundary of thought and the beginning of prayer. Let Thy will be done, O Lord. Help us. Come and dwell within us. Or more simply: Lord have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us! Lord have mercy upon us, and forgive us our sins! Words fail me, O Lord, but Thou knowest what is in my heart, for Thou dwellest in it. And so I fell asleep. I was restless as usual, woke up several times, and had bad dreams. I seemed to be swimming in the sea, and wondering how it was that I lay so high above the water; why the water did not cover me. The sea was a beautiful green, and some people seemed to be in my way.

I wanted to come out of the water, but could

not, because several women were standing on the shore and I was naked. I took the dream to mean that the power of the flesh was strong within me, standing in my way, but deliverance was close at hand. I got up before dawn, struck a flint, but could not light the tinder for a long time, after which, putting on my dressing-gown of elk skin, I went out into the fresh air. The rosy orange glow of the rising sun could be seen behind the snow-clad pines and larches. I brought in the wood which I chopped yesterday, lit my stove, and began chopping some more. It grew lighter. I had my breakfast of soaked rusks, shut the damper of the stove as soon as the logs were red, and sat down to write.

I begin again. I was born on 10th December 1777, and was named Alexander by my grandmother's wish, in the hope, as she afterwards told me, that I should become as great as Alexander of Macedonia, and as holy as Alexander Nevsky. I was christened a week after my birth in the big church of the palace. I was carried into the church by the Duchess of Courland on a brocade pillow, whilst a number of other great personages held a cover over me. The Empress was my godmother, the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia were my godfathers.

My room was arranged according to my grandmother's taste. I can of course remember nothing about it, but have been told by other people. It was a large room with three high windows. A space was portioned off in the middle by four columns, with a velvety canopy overhead fastened to the ceiling, and silk curtains falling to the ground. Under this canopy there was a little iron bedstead with a leather mattress, a little pillow, and a light English blanket. The whole was enclosed by a rail four feet high, so that visitors should not come too close. There was no furniture in the room with the exception of the nurse's bed behind the curtains.

All the details of my physical training were settled by my grandmother. I was not allowed to be rocked, and was swathed in a new way, with the feet left bare. I used to be bathed first in warm then in cold water. My clothes, too, were of a peculiar kind; none of my garments had any seams or fasteners, and were slipped straight over my head. As soon as I was able to crawl, I was put upon the carpet and left to my own devices. I was told that in the early days my grandmother used frequently to sit down beside me on the carpet and play with me. But I have no recollection of it, neither do I remember my nurse.

She was the wife of a gardener at Tsarskoye

Selo, and was called Avdotia Petrova. I saw her again in the garden at Tsarskoye when I was eighteen years old — she came up and told me who she was. It was at the best time of my life, during my first friendship with Chartorisky, when I was filled with disgust at what went on at the two courts — my poor unfortunate father's and my grandmother's. She had made me hate her at that time. I was still a man then, and not a bad man, full of good intentions. I was walking in the garden with Chartorisky, when a neatly-dressed woman came out of one of the side avenues. Her rosy face, wreathed in smiles, was wonderfully kind and pleasant. She came up to me excitedly, and falling down on her knees, seized my hand and began kissing it.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Your Highness! Your Highness! Heaven be praised that I see you again!”

“I was your foster-mother, Avdotia Dunyasha. I nursed you for eleven months. Thank the Lord for this meeting with you!”

I raised her with difficulty, asked where she lived, and promised to go and see her.

The charming interior of her tiny cottage, her sweet daughter, my foster-sister, a perfect Russian beauty, who was engaged to the court riding-master, her husband the gardener, just as smiling as his wife, and their group of little children, all

seemed to light up the darkness surrounding me.

"This is real life, real happiness!" I thought. "How simple it all is, how clear! No envies, intrigues, quarrels!"

This beloved Dunyasha was my foster-mother. My head nurse was a certain Sophia Ivanovna Benkendorf, a German; my second nurse was a Miss Hessler, an Englishwoman. Sophia Ivanovna Benkendorf was a tall, stout woman, with a pale complexion and straight nose. She had a majestic bearing when in the nursery, but was marvellously small and servile when in the presence of my grandmother, who was about a head shorter than herself. She was obsequious and severe with me at the same time. At one moment she was a queen in her broad skirts and with her haughty countenance; at another she was a cringing, hypocritical serving-maid. Praskovia Ivanovna Hessler was a long-faced, red-haired, serious Englishwoman, but when she smiled, her face shone with radiance, so that it was impossible to keep from smiling with her. I liked her sense of order, her cleanliness, her kindness, and her firmness. She seemed to be possessed of some mysterious knowledge of which neither my mother nor even grandmother herself were aware.

I remember my mother at that time as some supernaturally beautiful vision, mysterious and

sad, gorgeously dressed in silks and laces, and glittering with diamonds. She would come into my room with her bare round white arms and a curiously aloof expression on her face which I did not understand. She would caress me, take me up in those lovely arms of hers, raise me to her still more lovely face, and, shaking back her beautiful thick hair, would kiss me and begin to cry. On one occasion she let me drop out of her arms as she fell to the floor senseless.

Strange to say, I had no sort of love for my mother. Whether it was due to her attitude towards me, or to my grandmother's influence, or because I was able by my childish instinct to see through all the court intrigues centring round me, I am unable to say. There used to be something strained about her manner towards me. She was not really interested in me, but seemed to be displaying me for some end, and I was conscious of this. I was not mistaken, as I learnt later.

My grandmother took me away from my parents and brought me up entirely herself. She intended placing me on the throne instead of my poor unfortunate father, her son, whom she hated. Needless to say, I knew nothing of this at the time, but as soon as I began to notice things I felt myself to be an object of enmity and rivalry, the plaything of conspirators, without knowing the why

or wherefore. I was conscious of every one's utter indifference to me — to my childish heart, that had no need of a crown but rather of love, of which I knew nothing. There was my mother, who was always depressed when she saw me. On one occasion she was talking to Sophia Ivanovna in German, when she heard my grandmother coming; she suddenly burst into tears and ran out of the room. There was my father, who sometimes came to see us and whom we sometimes went to see. This poor unfortunate father of mine showed even greater displeasure on seeing me than my mother. His whole bearing towards me was one of restrained anger. I remember on one occasion how we were taken to their apartments before they set out for their travels abroad in 1781. I happened to be standing next to him, when he suddenly thrust me away, jumped up from his chair with flashing eyes, and gasped out something concerning me and my grandmother. I cannot recall all that he said, but the words *après 62 tout est possible* have remained in my memory. I remember how I got frightened and burst into tears. My mother took me up in her arms and kissed me, then carried me over to him. He gave me his blessing hurriedly and rushed out of the room, his high heels clattering as he went.

It was not until long after that I understood the meaning of this outburst. They set out for their travels under the name of *Comte et Comtesse du Nord*. It was my grandmother's idea that they should go. My father was afraid that in his absence he would be deprived of the right to the throne and that I should be acknowledged as his successor. Good God! he prized that which ruined us both — ruined us bodily and spiritually, and I, unfortunate man, prized it no less than he!

I hear some one knocking at the door and chanting a prayer in the name of Father and Son. Amen. I must put away my papers and go and see who it is. With God's grace I will continue to-morrow.

III

December 13.

Last night I slept very little and had bad dreams. I thought that an unpleasant, sickly-looking woman was pressing herself close against me and I was not afraid of her, nor of the sin, but afraid that my wife should see us. I did not want to hear her reproaches again. I am seventy-two years old and am not yet free. In a waking state it is possible to deceive yourself, but in dreams you get a

true estimate of the plane that you have reached. I had a second dream which gave me another proof of my low moral condition. I thought that some one had brought me some sweets wrapped up in green moss. We unpacked them and divided them between us, leaving a few over. I still went on selecting some for myself, when suddenly I caught sight of an unpleasant-looking, dark-coloured boy, a son of the Sultan, stretching his arm towards me and trying to clutch them. I pushed him away rudely, though I knew quite well that it was far more natural for a child to eat sweets than for me, but I was angry with him and would not give him any and was conscious at the same time that it was mean.

A similar thing happened to me when I was awake. I had a visit from Maria Martemenovna; a messenger called yesterday to ask if she might come. I did not like to hurt her feelings, so I consented, but I find these visits extremely trying. She came to-day. I could hear the sound of her sledge over the crisp snow when she was still some way off. She arrived in her fur coat and shawls, laden with packages she had brought for me, letting in so much cold that I was obliged to put on my dressing-gown. She had brought me pancakes, lenten oil, and apples. She had come to consult me about her daughter, whom a rich

widower wished to marry, and wanted to know if she was to give her consent. Their tremendous opinion of my wisdom is extremely annoying to me. All my protestations to the contrary they invariably put down to my humility. I repeated to her what I had said many times before, that chastity is higher than marriage, but that the Apostle Paul says it is better to marry than be the slave of passion.

Her brother-in-law Nikanor Ivanov was with her. He had once asked me to settle in his house, and has never since ceased worrying me with his visits. Nikanor Ivanov is a great trial to me. I can never overcome my aversion of him. Help me, O Lord, to see my own sins that I may not judge my brother. All his shortcomings are known to me. I see through them with a malicious shrewdness. I am conscious of his weaknesses and cannot conquer my dislike of him — and he is my brother, with the same divine element in him that is in me. What do these aversions mean! It is not my first experience of them. The two strongest antipathies I ever felt in my life were against Louis XVIII., with his corpulent body, hook nose, irritating white hands; his conceit, insolence, and utter stupidity . . . (there! I cannot keep from abusing him). The other was against Nikanor Ivanov, who tormented me

for two whole hours yesterday. Everything about him, from his voice, his hair, to his very nails was repulsive to me. I pretended to be unwell in order to account for my depression to Maria Martemenovna. After they had gone I said my prayers and grew calmer. I thank Thee, O Lord, for the power Thou hast granted me over the only thing that is necessary to me. I tried to remember that Nikanor Ivanov was once an innocent child and that he will come to die like the rest of us. I tried to think kindly of Louis XVIII., who was dead. I felt sorry that Nikanor Ivanov was not there that I might show him how kindly disposed I felt towards him.

Maria Martemenovna brought me a quantity of candles so that I shall be able to write at night.

I have just been out. To the left the stars had already merged into the glorious light of the aurora borealis. How beautiful!! How beautiful! I must continue.

My father and mother started on their travels abroad and my brother Constantine and I were left in the entire charge of our grandmother. My brother, who was born two years later than I, had been christened Constantine in the hope that he would one day become the Emperor of Constantinople.

Children readily grow fond of people, especially of those who are kind to them. My grandmother was very nice to me, made much of me, and I loved her in spite of an extremely repellant odour that always seemed to hang about her. The stringent scents could not disguise this odour — I used to notice it particularly when I sat upon her knee. I was still more repelled by her clean yellowish hands covered with wrinkles, so shiny and slippery, the fingers bending over, and the nails unnaturally long. Her languid, lustreless eyes, that seemed almost dead, and the smile playing about her toothless mouth, produced an oppressive though not altogether unpleasant effect on those who saw her. I believed at that time that the languid expression of her eyes was due to the enormous pains she took over her toilet. At any rate I was told so. I felt sorry for her then, but now I think of it with disgust.

I had seen Potemkin, once or twice. This huge, greasy, one-eyed monster was terrible.

The thing that awed me most about him, though he used to play with me and call me your Highness, was the fact that he never seemed afraid of my grandmother, like other people, but would speak boldly in her presence in his gruff, bellowing voice.

Another man whom I frequently saw in her

company was Lanskoy. He was nearly always with her. The whole Court hovered about him and made much of him. Needless to say I did not understand who Lanskoy was at the time, and liked him. I was attracted by his curly hair, his shapely legs in tight elk-skin breeches, his happy, light-hearted smile, his diamonds and jewels, glittering all over him.

It was a time full of gaieties. We were taken to Tsarskoye Selo, we rowed on the river, we busied ourselves in the garden, we went out walking and riding. Constantine, a chubby, red-haired little boy, *un petit Bacchus* as grandmother used to call him, kept us amused with his lively fun. He used to mimic everybody, including Sophia Ivanovna and even grandmother herself. One event of that time impressed itself on my memory. This was the death of Sophia Ivanovna Benkendorf. She died one evening at Tsarskoye in grandmother's presence. Sophia Ivanovna had just brought us in to her and was talking and smiling, and suddenly her face changed, she reeled, leaned up against the door for support, and fell down senseless. People came running in and we were taken away. The next day we heard that she was dead. I cried very much, felt very miserable, and would not be comforted. They all thought that I was grieved about Sophia Ivanovna,

but that was not true. I cried at the thought that people should have to die; that there should be such a thing as death in the world. I could not comprehend, could not believe, that it was the inevitable fate of all men. I remember how, in my five-year-old soul, there rose up questions about the meaning of death and the meaning of life that ends in death. Those vital questions confronting all men, to which the wise have tried to seek an answer in vain, and the foolish have tried to ignore and forget. As is natural to a child, particularly one in my position, I dismissed the terrifying idea of death from my mind; forgot about it as if it did not exist.

Another important event of that time which came as a consequence of Sophia Ivanovna's death, was that we passed over into the charge of a tutor. He was Nicolai Ivanovich Saltikov — not the Saltikov who, in all probability, was our grandfather, but Nicolai Ivanovich, who had been attached to my father's Court. He was a little man, with an enormous head and a stupid-looking countenance, on which there was a constant grimace. Constantine used to imitate it beautifully. This change necessitated parting with my dear Praskovia Ivanovna, my old nurse.

Those who have not had the misfortune of being born in a royal house can hardly imagine the

distorted view we have of people, nor our false attitude towards them. Instead of being instilled with a sense of dependence on our elders natural to children, or with a sense of gratitude for all the good we enjoyed, we were made to believe that we were some kind of superior beings whose every wish must be gratified. Beings who, by a single word or smile, not only paid for all the kindness showered upon them, but were even conferring some sort of favour, making others happy.

It is true that politeness was expected of us; but by a peculiar childish instinct, I soon saw that we were not meant to be polite for the benefit of others, but merely so as to enhance our own grandeur.

I remember one festive day. My brother, Saltikov and I were driving along the Nevsky. We sat on the front seat, with two powdered footmen in red livery standing behind. It was a beautiful day. Constantine and I were dressed in uniforms, unbuttoned in front, exposing our white waistcoats, on which lay the order of St. Andrew. We wore hats with feathers, which we kept raising all the time to people greeting us. The crowd stared and cheered, and ran after us — “*On vous salue.*” Nicolai Ivanovich kept on saying, “*A droite.*” As we passed the guardhouse the sentinels came running out to have a look at us.

I always liked to see them. From my earliest childhood I had a passion for soldiers and military manœuvres.

It was always instilled into us, particularly by our grandmother, who believed it least of all, that we must always bear in mind that all men are equal. But I knew somehow that those who talked about equality did not believe in it.

Once when I was playing with Sasha Galitsin, he pushed me accidentally, and hurt me.

"How dare you!" I cried.

"I didn't mean it. It's all right!"

I was so outraged that my blood rushed to my heart. I complained to Nicolai Ivanovich, and was not ashamed when Galitsin was made to apologise.

Enough for to-day. My candle is nearly out, and I must break up some fagots. My axe is blunt, and I have nothing to sharpen it on. Besides, I don't know how to do it.

IV

December 17.

I have not written anything for the last three days, because I have not been very well. I tried to read the Testament, but could not bring myself

to that understanding of it, that communion with God that I formerly experienced. I used to think at one time that it was impossible for man to live without desire. I was always in a state of desire for something or other, and am not free from it now. At one time I desired to conquer Napoleon; I desired to be Europe's peacemaker; I desired to free myself of my crown; but all these desires, whether fulfilled, or unfulfilled, soon ceased to attract me, and gave place to new ones. So it went on without end. Recently I longed for winter to come — winter has come. I longed for solitude, and have almost attained it. Now I want to write the story of my life so that it may be a warning to others, but whether I accomplish it or not, new desires will spring up just the same. If life is nothing more than the begetting of desire, and happiness the fulfilment of desire, then is there not some sort of desire fundamental to every man that would always be fulfilled, or that would be possible of fulfilment? It became clear to me that such a desire must be death. The whole of life would then become a preparation for the fulfilment of this desire, and would inevitably be fulfilled.

The idea seemed strange to me at first, but meditating on it further, I was convinced that the only thing a wise man could wish for was death.

Not death for its own sake, but for that stream of life leading from it. It would free the spiritual nature inherent in every man from all passions and temptations. I see this now, having been freed from the worst of that darkness that obscured my own soul from me, not letting me see its oneness with God — nay, that obscured God Himself. The idea came to me unconsciously.

If I really believed that my highest good was to be delivered from passion and to be united with God, then I ought to welcome everything that brought me nearer death, such as old age and sickness. It would in a sense be a fulfilment of my one and only desire. I see this clearly when I am well, but when I am ill, as I have been for the last two days, I cannot see it in the same light, and though I do not rebel against death, yet do not long for its approach. This is a condition of spiritual inertia. I must be patient.

I will go on from where I left off yesterday.

Most of the things I have related about my childhood I have heard from others. Frequently the things that have been told me and my own impressions get mixed up one with another, so that I am sometimes unable to distinguish between the two.

The whole of my life from the very moment of my birth until my present old age, makes me think of a plain enveloped in a thick fog. Everything

is hidden from view, when all at once the mist lifts itself in places, disclosing tiny little islands *des éclaircies* on which people and objects can be distinguished, quite disconnected with one another, surrounded by an impenetrable veil of mist.

In my childhood these *éclaircies* appeared very rarely in the interminable sea of fog and smoke surrounding me. As I grew older I could see them more often, but even now there are periods of my life that have left no trace on my memory. I have already given some of the events of my early childhood that have most impressed themselves on my mind, the death of Sophia Benken-dorf, the parting scene with my parents, my lively brother Constantine, and there are other reminiscences that come crowding back as I think of the past. But, for instance, I have no recollection of when Constantine first appeared, nor when we came to live together, but I do remember one Christmas Eve when he was five and I was seven years old. It was after the midnight service when they put us to bed. We both got together as soon as we were left alone. Constantine, with nothing on but a nightshirt, climbed into my bed, and we began a lively game which consisted in slapping each other on our naked bodies. We laughed until our sides ached, and were feeling ever so happy, when suddenly Nicolaï Ivanovich came into the

room with his enormous powdered head, and in an embroidered coat. He was horror-stricken on catching sight of us, and flew at us in a perfect state of terror that I have never been able to fathom. He put Constantine back in his own bed, threatened to punish us and to tell our grandmother.

Another thing that impressed itself on my memory occurred somewhat later, when I was about nine. It was the quarrel between Alexei Gregorievich Orlov and Potenkin, which took place in my grandmother's room in our presence. It happened a short time before our departure for the Crimea and our first visit to Moscow. Nicolai Ivanovich had taken us to see grandmother as usual. The large room with a carved and painted ceiling was full of people. My grandmother was sitting before a golden dressing-table, in a white dressing-jacket, surrounded by her maids, who were putting the finishing touches to her hair. It was tastefully dressed on the top of her head. She smiled on seeing us, and went on talking to a general decorated with the order of St. Andrew. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a terrible scar across his cheek from the mouth to the ear. It was Orlov, *le Balafre*. I had never seen him before.

My favourite little dog, Michot, sprang from

the foot of grandmother's dress, and began pawing me and licking my face. We came up to grandmother and kissed her plump yellow hand. She put it under my chin, and began to caress me with her bent fingers. In spite of her perfumes, I felt that unpleasant odour about her. She continued talking to the Balafre. "Is he not a fine fellow?" she said, pointing to me. "You haven't seen him before, have you, Count?"

"They are both fine fellows," the Count replied, kissing our hands in turn.

"All right, all right!" she said to the maid, who was arranging a cap on her head. It was dear Marie Stepanovna, powdered and painted, who was always kind to me.

Lanskoy came up with an open snuff-box. Grandmother took some snuff, and smiled as she caught sight of Matriona Denisovna, her jester, who was just coming in.

(Here the papers break off.)

MEMOIRS OF A LUNATIC

MEMOIRS OF A LUNATIC.

THIS morning I underwent a medical examination in the government council room. The opinions of the doctors were divided. They argued among themselves and came at last to the conclusion that I was not mad. But this was due to the fact that I tried hard during the examination not to give myself away. I was afraid of being sent to the lunatic asylum, where I would not be able to go on with the mad undertaking I have on my hands. They pronounced me subject to fits of excitement, and something else, too, but nevertheless of sound mind. The doctor prescribed a certain treatment, and assured me that by following his directions my trouble would completely disappear. Imagine, all that torments me disappearing completely! Oh, there is nothing I would not give to be free from my trouble. The suffering is too great!

I am going to tell explicitly how I came to undergo that examination; how I went mad, and how my madness was revealed to the outside world.

Up to the age of thirty-five I lived like the rest of the world, and nobody had noticed any peculiarities in me. Only in my early childhood, before I was ten, I had occasionally been in a mental state similar to the present one, and then only at intervals, whereas now I am continually conscious of it.

I remember going to bed one evening, when I was a child of five or six. Nurse Euprasia, a tall, lean woman in a brown dress, with a double chin, was undressing me, and was just lifting me up to put me into bed.

"I will get into bed myself," I said, preparing to step over the net at the bedside.

"Lie down, Fedinka. You see, Mitinka is already lying quite still," she said, pointing with her head to my brother in his bed.

I jumped into my bed still holding nurse's hand in mine. Then I let it go, stretched my legs under the blanket and wrapped myself up. I felt so nice and warm! I grew silent all of a sudden and began thinking: "I love nurse, nurse loves me and Mitinka, I love Mitinka too, and he loves me and nurse. And nurse loves Taras; I love Taras too, and so does Mitinka. And Taras loves me and nurse. And mother loves me and nurse; nurse loves mother and me and father; everybody loves everybody, and everybody is happy."

Suddenly the housekeeper rushed in and began to shout in an angry voice something about a sugar basin she could not find. Nurse got cross and said she did not take it. I felt frightened; it was all so strange. A cold horror came over me, and I hid myself under the blanket. But I felt no better in the darkness under the blanket. I thought of a boy who had got a thrashing one day in my presence — of his screams, and of the cruel face of Foka when he was beating the boy.

“Then you won’t do it any more; you won’t!” he repeated and went on beating.

“I won’t,” said the boy; and Foka kept on repeating over and over, “You won’t, you won’t!” and did not cease to strike the boy.

That was when my madness came over me for the first time. I burst into sobs, and they could not quiet me for a long while. The tears and despair of that day were the first signs of my present trouble.

I well remember the second time my madness seized me. It was when aunt was telling us about Christ. She told His story and got up to leave the room. But we held her back: “Tell us more about Jesus Christ!” we said.

“I must go,” she replied.

“No, tell us more, please!” Mitinka insisted, and she repeated all she had said before. She

told us how they crucified Him, how they beat and martyred Him, and how He went on praying and did not blame them.

"Auntie, why did they torture Him?"

"They were wicked."

"But wasn't He God?"

"Be still — it is nine o'clock, don't you hear the clock striking?"

"Why did they beat Him? He had forgiven them. Then why did they hit Him? Did it hurt Him? Auntie, did it hurt?"

"Be quiet, I say. I am going to the dining-room to have tea now."

"But perhaps it never happened, perhaps He was not beaten by them?"

"I am going."

"No, Auntie, don't go! . . ." And again my madness took possession of me. I sobbed and sobbed, and began knocking my head against the wall.

Such had been the fits of madness in my childhood. But after I was fourteen, from the time the instincts of sex awoke and I began to give way to vice, my madness seemed to have passed, and I was a boy like other boys. Just as happens with all of us who are brought up on rich, overabundant food, and are spoiled and made effemi-

nate, because we never do any physical work, and are surrounded by all possible temptations, which excite our sensual nature when in the company of other children similarly spoiled, so I had been taught vice by other boys of my age and I indulged in it. As time passed other vices came to take the place of the first. I began to know women, and so I went on living, up to the time I was thirty-five, looking out for all kinds of pleasures and enjoying them. I had a perfectly sound mind then, and never a sign of madness. Those twenty years of my normal life passed without leaving any special record on my memory, and now it is only with a great effort of mind and with utter disgust, that I can concentrate my thoughts upon that time.

Like all the boys of my set, who were of sound mind, I entered school, passed on to the university and went through a course of law studies. Then I entered the State service for a short time, married, and settled down in the country, educating — if our way of bringing up children can be called educating — my children, looking after the land, and filling the post of a Justice of the Peace.

It was when I had been married ten years that one of those attacks of madness I suffered from in my childhood made its appearance again. My wife and I had saved up money from her inherit-

ance and from some Government bonds* of mine which I had sold, and we decided that with that money we would buy another estate. I was naturally keen to increase our fortune, and to do it in the shrewdest way, better than any one else would manage it. I went about inquiring what estates were to be sold, and used to read all the advertisements in the papers. What I wanted was to buy an estate, the produce or timber of which would cover the cost of purchase, and then I would have the estate practically for nothing. I was looking out for a fool who did not understand business, and there came a day when I thought I had found one. An estate with large forests attached to it was to be sold in the Pensa Government. To judge by the information I had received the proprietor of that estate was exactly the imbecile I wanted, and I might expect the forests to cover the price asked for the whole estate. I got my things ready and was soon on my way to the estate I wished to inspect.

We had first to go by train (I had taken my man-servant with me), then by coach, with relays

* These government bonds were of a peculiar kind: At the moment of the abolition of serfdom, the Russian Government handed to the owners of serfs State bonds instead of money, called in Russia "the redemption bonds." The money due by the Government on those papers were paid off at fixed periods — and the owners of those bonds sold them often like ordinary Government papers.

of horses at the various stations. The journey was very pleasant, and my servant, a good-natured youth, liked it as much as I did. We enjoyed the new surroundings and the new people, and having now only about two hundred miles more to drive, we decided to go on without stopping, except to change horses at the stations. Night came on and we were still driving. I had been dozing, but presently I awoke, seized with a sudden fear. As often happens in such a case, I was so excited that I was thoroughly awake and it seemed as if sleep were gone for ever. "Why am I driving? Where am I going?" I suddenly asked myself. It was not that I disliked the idea of buying an estate at a bargain, but it seemed at that moment so senseless to journey to such a far away place, and I had a feeling as if I were going to die there, away from home. I was overcome with horror.

My servant Sergius awoke, and I took advantage of the fact to talk to him. I began to remark upon the scenery around us; he had also a good deal to say, of the people at home, of the pleasure of the journey, and it seemed strange to me that he could talk so gaily. He appeared so pleased with everything and in such good spirits, whereas I was annoyed with it all. Still, I felt more at ease when I was talking with him. Along with my feelings of restlessness and my secret horror,

however, I was fatigued as well, and longed to break the journey somewhere. It seemed to me my uneasiness would cease if I could only enter a room, have tea, and, what I desired most of all, sleep.

We were approaching the town Arzamas.

"Don't you think we had better stop here and have a rest?"

"Why not? It's an excellent idea."

"How far are we from the town?" I asked the driver.

"Another seven miles."

The driver was a quiet, silent man. He was driving rather slowly and wearily.

We drove on. I was silent, but I felt better, looking forward to a rest and hoping to feel the better for it. We drove on and on in the darkness, and the seven miles seemed to have no end. At last we reached the town. It was sound asleep at that early hour. First came the small houses, piercing the darkness, and as we passed them, the noise of our jingling bells and the trotting of our horses sounded louder. In a few places the houses were large and white, but I did not feel less dejected for seeing them. I was waiting for the station, and the samovar, and longed to lie down and rest.

At last we approached a house with pillars in

front of it. The house was white, but it seemed to me very melancholy. I felt even frightened at its aspect and stepped slowly out of the carriage. Sergius was busying himself with our luggage, taking what we needed for the night, running about and stepping heavily on the doorsteps. The sound of his brisk tread increased my weariness. I walked in and came into a small passage. A man received us; he had a large spot on his cheek and that spot filled me with horror. He asked us into a room which was just an ordinary room. My uneasiness was growing.

"Could we have a room to rest in?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, I have a very nice bedroom at your disposal. A square room, newly whitewashed."

The fact of the little room being square was — I remember it so well — most painful to me. It had one window with a red curtain, a table of birchwood and a sofa with a curved back and arms. Sergius boiled the water in the samovar and made the tea. I put a pillow on the sofa in the meantime and lay down. I was not asleep; I heard Sergius busy with the samovar and urging me to have tea. I was afraid to get up from the sofa, afraid of driving away sleep; and just to be sitting in that room seemed awful. I did not get up, but fell into a sort of doze. When I started up out of it, nobody was in the room and it was

quite dark. I woke up with the very same sensation I had the first time and knew sleep was gone. "Why am I here? Where am I going? Just as I am I must be for ever. Neither the Pensa nor any other estate will add to or take anything away from me. As for me, I am unbearably weary of myself. I want to go to sleep, to forget — and I cannot, I cannot get rid of self."

I went out into the passage. Sergius was sleeping there on a narrow bench, his hand hanging down beside it. He was sleeping soundly, and the man with the spot on his cheek was also asleep. I thought, by going out of the room, to get away from what was tormenting me. But *it* followed me and made everything seem dark and dreary. My feeling of horror, instead of leaving me, was increasing.

"What nonsense!" I said to myself. "Why am I so dejected? What am I afraid of?" "You are afraid of me"—I heard the voice of Death—"I am here."

I shuddered. Yes,—Death! Death will come, it will come and it ought not to come. Even in facing actual death I would certainly not feel anything of what I felt now. Then it would be simply fear, whereas now it was more than that. I was actually seeing, feeling the approach of death, and along with it I felt that death ought not to exist.

My entire being was conscious of the necessity of the right to live, and at the same time of the inevitability of dying. This inner conflict was causing me unbearable pain. I tried to shake off the horror; I found a half-burnt candle in a brass candlestick and lighted it. The candle with its red flame burnt down until it was not much taller than the low candlestick. The same thing seemed to be repeated over and over: nothing lasts, life is not, all is death — but death ought not to exist. I tried to turn my thoughts to what had interested me before, to the estate I was to buy and to my wife. Far from being a relief, these seemed nothing to me now. To feel my life doomed to be taken from me was a terror shutting out any other thought. “I must try to sleep,” I decided. I went to bed, but the next instant I jumped up, seized with horror. A sickness overcame me, a spiritual sickness not unlike the physical uneasiness preceding actual illness — but in the spirit, not in the body. A terrible fear similar to the fear of death, when mingled with the recollections of my past life, developed into a horror as if life were departing. Life and death were flowing into one another. An unknown power was trying to tear my soul into pieces, but could not rend it. Once more I went out into the passage to look at the two men asleep; once more

I tried to go to sleep. The horror was always the same — now red, now white and square. Something was tearing within but could not be torn apart. A torturing sensation! An arid hatred deprived me of every spark of kindly feeling. Just a dull and steady hatred against myself and against that which had created me. What did create me? God? We say God. . . . “What if I tried to pray?” I suddenly thought. I had not said a prayer for more than twenty years and I had no religious sentiment, although just for formality’s sake I fasted and partook of the communion every year. I began saying prayers: “God, forgive me,” “Our Father,” “Our Lady,” I was composing new prayers, crossing myself, bowing to the earth, looking around me all the while for fear I might be discovered in my devotional attitude. The prayers seemed to divert my thoughts from the previous terror, but it was more the fear of being seen by somebody that did it. I went to bed again. But the moment I shut my eyes the very same feeling of terror made me jump up. I could not stand it any longer. I called the hotel servant, roused Sergius from his sleep, ordered him to harness the horses to the carriage and we were soon driving on once more. The open air and the drive made me feel much better. But I realised that something new had

come into my soul, and had poisoned the life I had lived up to that hour.

We reached our destination in the evening. The whole day long I remained struggling with despair, and finally conquered it; but a horror remained in the depth of my soul. It was as if a misfortune had happened to me, and although I was able to forget it for a while, it remained at the bottom of my soul, and I was entirely dominated by it.

The manager of the estate, an old man, received us in a very friendly manner, though not exactly with great joy; he was sorry that the estate was to be sold. The clean little rooms with upholstered furniture, a new, shining samovar on the tea-table, nice large cups, honey served with the tea,—everything was pleasant to see. I began questioning him about the estate without any interest, as if I were repeating a lesson learned long ago and nearly forgotten. It was so uninteresting. But that night I was able to go to sleep without feeling miserable. I thought this was due to having said my prayers again before going to bed.

After that incident I resumed my ordinary life; but the apprehension that this horror would again come upon me was continual. I had to live my usual life without any respite, not giving way to my thoughts, just like a schoolboy who repeats

by habit and without thinking the lesson learned by heart. That was the only way to avoid being seized again by the horror and the despair I had experienced in Arzamas.

I had returned home safe from my journey; I had not bought the estate — I had not enough money. My life at home seemed to be just as it had always been, save for my having taken to saying prayers and to going to church. But now, when I recollect that time, I see that I only imagined my life to be the same as before. The fact was I merely continued what I had previously started, and was running with the same speed on rails already laid; but I did not undertake anything new.

Even in those things which I had already taken in hand my interest had diminished. I was tired of everything, and was growing very religious. My wife noticed this, and was often vexed with me for it. No new fit of distress occurred while I was at home. But one day I had to go unexpectedly to Moscow, where a lawsuit was pending. In the train I entered into conversation with a landowner from Kharkov. We were talking about the management of estates, about bank business, about the hotels in Moscow, and the theatres. We both decided to stop at the "Moscow Court," in the Miasnizkaia Street, and go that evening to the

opera, to *Faust*. When we arrived I was shown into a small room, the heavy smell of the passage being still in my nostrils. The porter brought in my portmanteau, and the maid lighted the candle, the flame of which burned up brightly and then flickered, as it usually does. In the room next to mine I heard somebody coughing, probably an old man. The maid went out, and the porter asked whether I wished him to open my bag. In the meanwhile the candle flame had flared up, throwing its light on the blue wallpaper with yellow stripes, on the partition, on the shabby table, on the small sofa in front of it, on the mirror hanging on the wall, and on the window. I saw what the small room was like, and suddenly felt the horror of the Arzamas night awakening within me.

“My God! Must I stay here for the night? How can I?” I thought. “Will you kindly unfasten my bag?” I said to the porter, to keep him longer in the room. “And now I’ll dress quickly and go to the theatre,” I said to myself.

When the bag had been untied I said to the porter, “Please tell the gentleman in Number 8 — the one who came with me — that I shall be ready presently, and ask him to wait for me.”

The porter left, and I began to dress in haste, afraid to look at the walls. “But what non-

sense!" I said to myself. "Why am I frightened like a child? I am not afraid of ghosts—" Ghosts!—To be afraid of ghosts is nothing to what I was afraid of! "But what is it? Absolutely nothing. I am only afraid of myself. . . . Nonsense!"

I slipped into a cold, rough, starched shirt, stuck in the studs, put on evening dress and new boots, and went to call for the Kharkov landowner, who was ready. We started for the opera house. He stopped on the way to have his hair curled, while I went to a French hairdresser to have mine cut, where I talked a little to the Frenchwoman in the shop and bought a pair of gloves. Everything seemed all right. I had completely forgotten the oblong room in the hotel, and the walls.

I enjoyed the *Faust* performance very much, and when it was over my companion proposed that we should have supper. This was contrary to my habits; but just at that moment I remembered the walls in my room, and accepted.

We returned home after one. I had two glasses of wine—an unusual thing for me—in spite of which I was feeling quite at ease.

But the moment we entered the passage with the lowered lamp lighting it, the moment I was surrounded by the peculiar smell of the hotel, I felt a cold shudder of horror running down my

back. But there was nothing to be done. I shook hands with my new friend, and stepped into my room.

I had a frightful night — much worse than the night at Arzamas; and it was not until dawn, when the old man in the next room was coughing again, that I fell asleep — and then not in my bed, but, after getting in and out of it many times, on the sofa.

I suffered the whole night unbearably. Once more my soul and my body were tearing themselves apart within me. The same thoughts came again: “I am living, I have lived up till now, I have the right to live; but all around me is death and destruction. Then why live? Why not die? Why not kill myself immediately? No; I could not. I am afraid. Is it better to wait for death to come when it will? No, that is even worse; and I am also afraid of that. Then, I must live. But what for? In order to die?” I could not get out of that circle. I took a book, and began reading. For a moment it made me forget my thoughts. But then the same questions and the same horror came again. I got into bed, lay down, and shut my eyes. That made the horror worse. God had created things as they are. But why? They say, “Don’t ask; pray.” Well, I did pray; I was praying now, just as I did at Arza-

mas. At that time I had prayed simply, like a child. Now my prayers had a definite meaning: "If Thou exist, reveal Thy existence to me. To what end am I created? What am I?" I was bowing to the earth, repeating all the prayers I knew, composing new ones; and I was adding each time, "Reveal Thy existence to me!" I became quiet, waiting for an answer. But no answer came, as if there were nothing to answer. I was alone, alone with myself and was answering my own questions in place of Him who would not answer. "What am I created for?" "To live in a future life," I answered. "Then why this uncertainty and torment? I cannot believe in future life. I did believe when I asked, but not with my whole soul. Now I cannot, I cannot! If Thou didst exist, Thou wouldst reveal it to me, to all men. But Thou dost not exist, and there is nothing true but distress." But I cannot accept that! I rebelled against it; I implored Him to reveal His existence to me. I did all that everybody does, but He did not reveal Himself to me. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you," I remembered, and began to entreat; in doing so I felt no real comfort, but just surcease of despair. Perhaps it was not entreaty on my part, but only denial of Him. You retreat a step from Him, and He goes from you a mile. I did not believe in Him,

and yet here I was entreating Him. But He did not reveal Himself. I was balancing my accounts with Him, and was blaming Him. I simply did not believe.

The next day I used all my endeavours to get through with my affairs somehow during the day, in order to be saved from another night in the hotel room. Although I had not finished everything, I left for home in the evening.

That night at Moscow brought a still greater change into my life, which had been changing ever since the night at Arzamas. I was now paying less attention to my affairs, and grew more and more indifferent to everything around me. My health was also getting bad. My wife urged me to consult a doctor. To her my continual talk about God and religion was a sign of ill-health, whereas I knew I was ill and weak, because of the unsolved questions of religion and of God.

I was trying not to let that question dominate my mind, and continued living amid the old unaltered conditions, filling up my time with incessant occupations. On Sundays and feast days I went to church; I even fasted as I had begun to do since my journey to Pensa, and did not cease to pray. I had no faith in my prayers, but somehow I kept the demand note in my possession instead

of tearing it up, and was always presenting it for payment, although I was aware of the impossibility of getting paid. I did it just on the chance. I occupied my days, not with the management of the estate — I felt disgusted with all business because of the struggle it involved — but with the reading of papers, magazines, and novels, and with card-playing for small stakes. The only outlet for my energy was hunting. I had kept that up from habit, having been fond of this sport all my life.

One day in winter, a neighbour of mine came with his dogs to hunt wolves. Having arrived at the meeting-place, we put on snowshoes to walk over the snow and move rapidly along. The hunt was unsuccessful; the wolves contrived to escape through the stockade. As I became aware of that from a distance, I took the direction of the forest to follow the fresh track of a hare. This led me far away into a field. There I spied the hare, but he had disappeared before I could fire. I turned to go back, and had to pass a forest of huge trees. The snow was deep, the snowshoes were sinking in, and the branches were entangling me. The wood was getting thicker and thicker. I wondered where I was, for the snow had changed all the familiar places. Suddenly I realised that I had lost my way. How should I get

home or reach the hunting party? Not a sound to guide me! I was tired and bathed in perspiration. If I stopped, I would probably freeze to death; if I walked on, my strength would forsake me. I shouted, but all was quiet, and no answer came. I turned in the opposite direction, which was wrong again, and looked round. Nothing but the wood on every hand. I could not tell which was east or west. I turned back again, but I could hardly move a step. I was frightened, and stopped. The horror I had experienced in Arzamas and in Moscow seized me again, only a hundred times greater. My heart was beating, my hands and feet were shaking. Am I to die here? I don't want to! Why death? What is death? I was about to ask again, to reproach God, when I suddenly felt I must not; I ought not. I had not the right to present any account to Him; He had said all that was necessary, and the fault was wholly mine. I began to implore His forgiveness for I felt disgusted with myself. The horror, however, did not last long. I stood still one moment, plucked up courage, took the direction which seemed to be the right one, and was actually soon out of the wood. I had not been far from its edge when I lost my way. As I came out on the main road, my hands and feet were still shaking, and my heart was beating violently. But my soul was

full of joy. I soon found my party, and we all returned home together. I was not quite happy, but I knew there was a joy within me which I would understand later on; and that joy proved real. I went to my study to be alone and prayed, remembering my sins, and asking for forgiveness. They did not seem to be numerous; but when I thought of what they were they were hateful to me.

Then I began to read the Scriptures. The Old Testament I found incomprehensible but enchanting, the New touching in its meekness. But my favourite reading was now the lives of the saints; they were consoling to me, affording examples which seemed more and more possible to follow. Since that time I have grown even less interested in the management of affairs and in family matters. These things even became repulsive to me. Everything was wrong in my eyes. I did not quite realise why they were wrong, but I knew that the things of which my whole life had consisted, now counted for nothing. This was plainly revealed to me again on the occasion of the projected purchase of an estate, which was for sale in our neighbourhood on very advantageous terms. I went to inspect it. Everything was very satisfactory, the more so because the peasants on that estate had no land of their own beyond their vegetable gardens.

I grasped at once that in exchange for the right of using the landowner's pasture-grounds, they would do all the harvesting for him; and the information I was given proved that I was right. I saw how important that was, and was pleased, as it was in accordance with my old habits of thought. But on my way home I met an old woman who asked her way, and I entered into a conversation with her, during which she told me about her poverty. On returning home, when telling my wife about the advantages the estate afforded, all at once I felt ashamed and disgusted. I said I was not going to buy that estate, for its profits were based on the sufferings of the peasants. I was struck at that moment with the truth of what I was saying, the truth of the peasants having the same desire to live as ourselves, of their being our equals, our brethren, the children of the Father, as the Gospel says. But unexpectedly something which had been gnawing within me for a long time became loosened and was torn away, and something new seemed to be born instead.

My wife was vexed with me and abused me. But I was full of joy. This was the first sign of my madness. My utter madness began to show itself about a month later.

This began by my going to church; I was listening to the Mass with great attention and with

a faithful heart, when I was suddenly given a wafer; after which every one began to move forward to kiss the Cross, pushing each other on all sides. As I was leaving church, beggars were standing on the steps. It became instantly clear to me that this ought not to be, and in reality was not. But if this is not, then there is no death and no fear, and nothing is being torn asunder within me, and I am not afraid of any calamity which may come.

At that moment the full light of the truth was kindled in me, and I grew into what I am now. If all this horror does not necessarily exist around me, then it certainly does not exist within me. I distributed on the spot all the money I had among the beggars in the porch, and walked home instead of driving in my carriage as usual, and all the way I talked with the peasants.

TWO WAYFARERS

TWO WAYFARERS

Two men with bundles over their shoulders were walking along the dusty highroad that lies between Moscow and Toulá. The younger man wore a short coat and velveteen trousers. Spectacles gleamed out from under the brim of his new peasant's hat. The other was a man of about fifty, remarkably handsome, dressed in a monk's frock, with a leather belt round his waist and a high round black cap, such as novices wear in monasteries. His long dark beard and dark hair were turning grey.

The younger man was pale and sallow, was covered with dust, and seemed scarcely able to drag one foot after the other. The old man walked cheerfully along, swinging his arms, his shoulders well thrown back. It seemed as though dust dared not settle on his handsome face nor his body feel fatigue.

The young man, Serge Vasilievich Borzin, was a doctor of science of Moscow University. The old man, Nicholas Petrovich Serpov, had been a sub-lieutenant in an infantry regiment during the

reign of Alexander, then he had become a monk, but was expelled from the monastery for bad conduct. He had, however, retained the monastic garb. The men had come together in this wise. Borzin, after taking his doctor's degree, and after writing several articles for the Moscow reviews, went to stay in the country, to plunge into the current of peasant life and to refresh himself in the waves of the popular stream, as he put it. After a month spent in the country in complete solitude, he wrote the following letter to a literary friend of his who was editor of a journal:—

“MY MASTER AND FRIEND IVAN FINOGEICH,
— It is not for us to predict — indeed we cannot — the ultimate solution of those problems which are solving themselves in the secrecy of the village life of the Russian people. Various phases of the Russian mind and its phenomena must be carefully taken into consideration — the seclusion of their lives; the revolutionary reforms introduced by Peter; etc., etc.”

The long and the short of it was that Borzin, having been deeply impressed by the everyday life of the people, had become convinced that the problem of determining the destiny of the Russian nation was more difficult and complex than he had

been wont to imagine, and that in order to find its solution he must traverse Russia on foot; so he asked his friend not to discuss the question in his journal pending his return, promising to set forth all that he discovered in a series of articles.

Having written this letter, Borzin set about making preparations for his journey. Though it annoyed him, he had to consider such details as what he should wear. He bought a coat, nailed boots, and a hat such as the peasants wear, and, shutting out his servants, studied himself for a long time in his glass. He could not get rid of his spectacles, as he was too near-sighted. After this, the most essential thing was to get some money. He needed at least 300 roubles. There was no money in his cash-box, so Borzin summoned his bailiff and accountant and went through his books. Finding that he had 180 quarters of oats, he ordered them to be sold, but the bailiff remarked that the oats had been kept for seed. In another column he found an entry of 160 quarters of rye, and asked if that would suffice for seed. The bailiff replied by asking if he wanted them to sow last year's rye. The conversation ended shortly after, the bailiff recognising that Borzin knew as little about farming as a babe, and Borzin realising that the rye had been sown already, that new seed was usually used, and that

after deducting enough for daily needs from the 180 quarters of corn, the rest might be sold.

The money having been obtained, Borzin made up his mind one evening to start next day, when he heard an unknown voice in the hall, and his father's old valet Stephen entered and announced Nicholas Petrovich Serpov.

"Who is he?"

"Don't you remember the monk who used to visit your father?"

"No, not at all. What does he want?"

"He wishes to see you, but I don't think he is quite himself."

Serpov entered the room, bowed, stamped his foot and said,—

"Serpov — a wayfarer." They shook hands. "Nothing but ignorance — no education. I admonish Russia in vain. Russia is a fool. The peasant is industrious but Russia is a fool. Don't you agree? I knew your father. We used to sit and chat, and he would say, 'You will get on.' But why are you dressed like that? I am as plain-spoken as a soldier, and I ask why?"

"I am going to make a journey on foot."

"I am on the road myself. I am a wayfarer. I have been all the way to Greece, to the Athos Monastery, but I never saw any one as honest as our peasants."

Serpov sat down, asked for vodka, and then went to bed. Borzin was puzzled. Next day Serpov was the listener and, as Borzin liked to talk, Serpov heard all about his theory and the aim of his journey. Serpov thoroughly approved of it, and ended by offering himself as companion, which Borzin accepted; partly because he did not know how to get rid of him; partly because, with all his craziness, Serpov could flatter; partly, and chiefly, because Borzin regarded the monk as a remarkable, though somewhat complicated, phenomenon of Russian life.

They set out, and when we found them on the highroad they were nearing the place, where, according to their plan, the first night was to be spent. They had accomplished the first twenty-two versts of their journey.

Serpov had a glass at the public-house and was in good spirits.

KHODINKA: AN INCIDENT OF THE
CORONATION OF NICHOLAS II.



KHODINKA*: AN INCIDENT OF THE CORONATION OF NICHOLAS II.

"I CANNOT understand such obstinacy. Why should you do without sleep and go 'with the people,' when you can go straight to the pavilion with your Aunt Vera, and see everything without any trouble? I told you Behr had promised to pass you through, though, as far as that's concerned, you have the right of entry as a maid of honour."

It was thus that Prince Paul Golitsin — known in the aristocratic set as "Pigeon" — addressed his twenty-three-year-old daughter Alexandra, called for shortness' sake "Rina."

The conversation took place in Moscow on 17th May 1893 — on the eve of the popular fête held to celebrate the coronation. Rina, a strong, handsome girl, with a profile characteristic of her race — the hooked nose of a bird of prey — had long ceased to be passionately devoted to balls

* The Khodinka is a large plain outside Moscow where the military often exercise. It was here that the people of Moscow assembled to celebrate the Tsar's accession, and where many hundreds were crushed to death.

or social functions, and was, or at least considered herself to be, an "advanced" woman and a lover of "the people." She was her father's only daughter and his favourite, and always did what she wished. In this particular instance it occurred to her that she would like to go to the popular festival with her cousin, not at mid-day with the Court, but together with the people, the porter and the grooms of their own household, who intended to start in the early morning.

"But, father, I do not want to *look at* the people; I want to *be with* them. I want to see how they feel towards the young Tsar. Surely for once . . ."

"Well, well, do as you like. I know how obstinate you are."

"Don't be angry, father, dear. I promise to be careful, and Alec will not leave my side."

Although the plan seemed wild and fantastic to her father, he gave his consent.

"Yes, of course you may," he answered when she asked if she might have the victoria. "Drive to Khodinka and send it back."

"All right."

She went up to him, and he blessed her, as was his custom, and she kissed his big white hand, and they separated.

There was no talk of anything but the morrow's

festival among the cigarette-makers in the lodgings let by the notorious Marie Yakovlevna. Several of Emelian Tagodin's friends had met in his room to discuss when they should start.

"It's not worth while going to bed at all. You'll only oversleep yourself," said Yakov, a bright youth who occupied a space behind a wooden partition.

"Why not have a little sleep?" retorted Emelian. "We'll start at dawn. Every one says that's the thing to do."

"Well, if we are going to bed, it's time we went."

"But, Emelian, mind you call us if we don't wake up in time."

Emelian promised he would, and, taking a reel of silk from a drawer in the table, drew the lamp nearer, and began to sew a missing button on his summer overcoat. When he had finished this job he laid out his best clothes and cleaned his boots, and, after saying several prayers — "Our Father," "Hail Mary," etc., the meaning of which he had never fathomed, and had not even been interested in — he took off his boots, and lay down on the crumpled, creaking bed.

"Why not?" he said to himself. "There is such a thing as luck. Perhaps I shall get a lottery ticket and win." The rumour had spread among

the people that, besides other gifts, some lottery tickets were to be distributed. "Well, the 10,000 rouble prize is expecting too much, but one might win 500 roubles. What couldn't I do with it? I could send something to the old folk; I'd make my wife leave her situation: it's no sort of existence living apart like this. I'd buy a good watch and a fur coat. As it is, it's one long struggle, and you're never out of your difficulties."

He began to dream that he and his wife were walking around the Alexander Gardens, and that the same policeman who had taken him up a year ago for using bad language when he was drunk was no longer a policeman, but a general, and that this same general smiled at him and invited him to go to a neighbouring public-house with him to hear a mechanical organ. The organ sounded just like a clock striking, and Emelian awoke to find that the clock really was striking wheezily, and that the landlady was coughing behind his door. It was not quite so dark as it had been the night before.

"Don't oversleep yourself."

Emelian got up, went barefooted across the room to the wooden partition to awake Yasha, and then proceeded to dress carefully, greasing and brushing his hair before the broken mirror.

"I'm all right! That's why girls are so fond

of me. Only I don't want to get into mischief."

He went to the landlady, as arranged the day before, to get some food. He put a meat pie, two eggs, some ham, and a small bottle of vodka into a bag, and then left the house with Yasha and walked towards the Peter Park.

They were not alone. Some were in front; others were hurrying up from behind. From all sides happy men, women, and children, dressed in their best, were collecting together, all going in the same direction. At last they reached the field called Khodinka. Its edges were black with people. It was cold in the early dawn, and here and there smoke was arising from the fires which were made from such twigs and branches as were available. Emelian found some friends who also had a fire, and round which they were sitting preparing their food and drink. The sun was rising clear and bright, and the general merriment was increasing. The air was filled with singing and chattering, and with jokes and laughter. Everything gave rise to pleasure, but still greater pleasures were in store. Emelian had a drink, and, lighting a cigarette, felt happier than ever.

The people were wearing their best clothes, but several rich merchants, with their wives and children, were also noticeable among the well-dressed working men. Rina Golitsin, too, was remarka-

ble as she walked at her cousin's side between the wood fires, happy and radiant at having got her own way, and at the thought of celebrating with the people the accession to the throne of a Tsar who was adored by them.

"Here's to your health, good lady," cried a factory hand to her, raising his glass to his lips. "Don't refuse to break bread with us."

"Thank you."

"You ought to answer 'a good appetite to you,'" whispered her cousin, showing off his knowledge of popular customs, and they moved on.

Accustomed to occupy the best places everywhere, they penetrated through the crowd, going straight for the pavilion. The crowd was so dense that, notwithstanding the bright weather, a thick mist caused by the breath of the people, hung over the field. But the police would not let them pass.

"I'm rather glad," said Rina. "Let us return," and so they went back into the crowd.

"Lies, all lies," said Emelian, seated with his companions in a circle round the food which was spread out on white paper — in answer to a young factory hand who, on approaching them, told them that the distribution of gifts had begun.

"I tell you it is so. It's contrary to regulations, but they have begun. I saw it myself.

Each one receives a mug and a packet and away they go."

"Of course, what do the crazy commissionaires care? They give as they choose."

"But why should they, how can they — against regulations?"

"You see they can."

"Let's go, friends. Why should we wait?"

They all rose. Emelian pocketed his bottle with the remains of the vodka and advanced with his comrades. They had not gone more than twenty yards when the crowd became so dense that it was difficult to stir.

"What are you pushing for?"

"You're pushing yourself."

"You're not the only one here."

"That'll do."

"Oh, Lord! I'm crushed!" cried a woman's voice.

A child could be heard screaming on the other side.

"Go to —"

"How dare you? Are you the only one? Everything will be taken before we get there. But I'll be even with them, the beasts, the devils," cried Emelian, squaring his stalwart shoulders and elbowing his way forward as best he could. Seeing every one else was elbowing and pushing he,

without knowing exactly why, also began to try to force a way for himself through the crowd. On every side people were crushing him, but those in front did not move or let any one through their ranks — and all were shouting and shrieking and groaning.

Emelian silently clenched his strong teeth and frowned, but without losing heart or strength he steadily continued to push those in front, though he made but little progress.

All at once there was a sudden agitation; the steady surging and swaying was followed by a rush forward to the right. Emelian looked to that side and saw something whizz over his head and fall among the crowd. One, two, three — he realised what it meant, and a voice near him exclaimed:

“Cursed devils — they are throwing the things among the crowd!”

The sound of screaming, laughing and groaning came from that part of the crowd where the bags were falling. Some one gave Emelian a severe blow in the ribs which made him even gloomier and angrier, but before he had time to recover from the blow some one else had trodden on his foot. Then his coat, his new coat, caught and was torn. With a feeling of maliciousness in his heart he exerted all his strength to advance when something suddenly happened which he could not under-

stand; and he found himself in an open space and could see the tents, where the mugs and packets of sweets were to be distributed. Up to then he had seen nothing but the backs of other people in front of him.

He felt glad, but only for a moment, for he realised that the reason he could see all these was because those who were in front had reached the trench and were slipping or rolling over into it, and that he himself was knocked down on top of a mass of people. He was tumbling on those below, and others from behind him were in their turn tumbling on him. For the first time he felt afraid. As he fell, a woman in a woollen shawl stumbled over him. Shaking her off, he tried to turn round, but those behind prevented him and his strength began to fail. Then some one clutched his legs and screamed. He neither saw nor heard anything, but fought his way through, treading on human beings on all sides.

"Friends, help,—take my watch—my gold watch," shrieked a man near him.

"Who wants a watch now?" thought Emelian, climbing out to the other side of the trench.

His heart was divided between fear—fear for himself and for his own life—and anger at those wild creatures who were pushing him. In spite of this, the aim with which he had set out—to reach

the tents and get hold of a packet with a lottery ticket — still drew him on.

The tents were now close at hand. He could see the distributors quite distinctly and could hear the cries of those who had arrived at the tents and the creaking of the boards on which the people in front were crowding.

Emelian stumbled. He had only about twenty paces more to go when he heard a child's scream under or rather between his feet. Emelian looked down and saw a bare-headed boy in a torn shirt lying face downwards, crying incessantly, and clutching at his legs. He felt his heart stop beating. All fear for himself immediately disappeared and with it his anger against the rest. He was sorry for the boy and, stooping down, put his arm round his waist, but those behind him were pushing so violently that he nearly fell and let go the child. Summoning his strength for a supreme effort he caught him up again and lifted him on his shoulders. For a moment the crush became less and Emelian managed to carry off the child.

"Give him to me," cried a coachman who was at Emelian's side, and taking the boy, raised him above the crowd.

"Run over the people."

Looking back, Emelian saw how the child walked further and further away, over the heads

and shoulders of the swaying mass, now rising above it, now vanishing in the crowd.

Emelian, however, continued to advance. He could not help doing so; but he was no longer attracted by the gifts and had no desire to reach the tents. He thought of the little boy Yasha, of those who had been trampled on, and of those whom he had seen as he crossed the trench.

When he reached the pavilion at last he received a mug and a packet of sweets, but they gave him no pleasure. What pleased him was that the crush was over, and that he could breathe and move about; but his pleasure, however, only lasted a moment, on account of the sight which met his eyes. A woman, in a torn striped shawl and in buttoned boots which stuck straight up, with her brown hair loose and in disorder, was lying on her back. One hand lay on the grass, the other, with closed fingers, was folded below her breast. Her face was white — that bluish white peculiar to the dead. She was the first who had been crushed to death and had been thrown over the fence right in front of the Tsar's pavilion.

When Emelian caught sight of her, two policemen were standing over her, and a police officer was giving them directions. A minute after a few Cossacks rode up and no sooner had their officer given them some order, than they rode full speed

at Emelian and at the others who were standing there, and drove them back into the crowd. Emelian was again caught in the whirl. The crush became worse than ever; and to add to the horror, one and the same everlasting crying and groaning of women and children, and men trampling their fellows under foot — and not able to help doing so. Emelian was no longer terrified or angry with those who were crushing him. He had but one desire — to get out, to be free, to have a smoke and a drink, and to explain the meaning of those feelings which arose in his mind.

He longed for a smoke and a drink, and when at last he managed to get away from the throng, he satisfied his craving for these.

It was not so with Alec and Rina. As they did not expect anything, they moved about among the people who were seated in groups, chatting with the women and children, when the whole people suddenly made a rush for the pavilion, the rumour having spread that the sweets and mugs were being given away contrary to regulations, and before Rina had time to turn round, she was separated from Alec and carried along by the crowd, and was overcome by terror. She tried to be quiet, but could not help screaming out for mercy. But there was no mercy, for they pressed round her

more and more. Her dress was torn, and her hat also fell off. She could not be quite sure, but she thought some one snatched at her watch and chain. Though she was a strong girl and might have resisted, she was in mortal fear not being able to breathe. Ragged and battered she just managed to keep on her feet.

But the moment the Cossacks charged the crowd to disperse it, Rina lost hope and directly she yielded to despair, her strength failed her and she fainted. Falling down she was not conscious of anything further.

When she regained consciousness she was lying on the grass. A bearded working man in a torn coat was squatting beside her and squirting water into her face as she opened her eyes; the man crossed himself and spat out the water. It was Emelian.

“Who are you? Where am I?”

“You’re on Khodinka field. Who am I? I’m a man, I’ve been badly crushed myself, but the likes of us can stand a good deal,” said Emelian.

“What’s this?” Rina asked, pointing to the coppers that lay on her breast.

“That’s because people thought you were dead, they gave coppers for your burial. But I had a

good look at you and thought to myself: 'No, she's alive,' and I got some water for you."

Rina glanced at herself and seeing her torn dress and bare breast, felt ashamed. The man understood and covered her.

"You're all right, miss, you'll not die."

People came up and also a policeman, while Rina sat up, and gave her father's name and address, and Emelian went for the cab. The crowd round her continued to increase. When Emelian returned with the cab, she rose, and refusing help, got into the vehicle by herself. She was so ashamed of the condition she was in.

"Where is your cousin?" asked an old woman.

"I don't know. I don't know," said Rina in despair.

(On reaching home she learnt that Alec had managed to leave the crowd when the crush first began and he returned home safely.)

"That man saved me," said Rina. "If it had not been for him, I don't know what would have happened."

"What is your name?" she said, turning to Emelian.

"Mine? What does my name matter?"

"She's a princess," a woman whispered in his ear. "Ri-i-i-ch."

"Come with me to my father, he will thank

you." Suddenly the heart of Emelian seemed to be infused with a kind of strength so that he would not have exchanged this feeling for a lottery ticket worth 200,000 roubles.

"Nonsense, go home, miss. What is there to thank me for?"

"Oh, no. I would so much rather.

"Good-bye, miss, God be with you. But, there, don't take away my overcoat," and he showed his white teeth with a merry smile which lived in Rina's memory to console her for the most terrible moments of her life.



INTRODUCTION TO "A MOTHER"



INTRODUCTION TO "A MOTHER"

I HAD known Marie Alexandrovna ever since we were children. As so often happens with young people, there was no suggestion of love-making about our companionship, with the possible exception of one evening when she was at our house and we played "Ladies and Gentlemen." She was fifteen, with plump, rosy hands, beautiful dark eyes, and a thick plait of black hair. I was so impressed by her during that evening that I imagined that I was in love with her. But that was the only time; during all the rest of our forty years' acquaintance we were on those excellent terms of friendship which exist between a man and a woman who mutually respect each other, which are so delightful when — as in our case — they are free from any idea of love-making.

I got a lot of enjoyment out of our friendship, and it taught me a great deal. I have never known a woman who more perfectly typified the good wife, the good mother. Through her I learned much, and came to understand many things.

I saw her for the last time last year, only a month before her death, which neither of us expected. She had just settled down to live alone with Barbara, her cook, in the grounds of a monastery. It was very strange to see this mother of eight children — this woman who had nearly fifty grandchildren — living alone in that way. But there was an evident finality about her determination to live by herself for the rest of her days in spite of the more or less sincere invitations of her family. As I knew her to be, I will not say a free-thinker, for she never laid any stress on that, but one who thought for herself with courage and common sense, I was puzzled at first to see her taking up her abode in the precincts of a monastery.

I knew that her heart was too full of real feeling to have any room for superstition, and I was well aware of her hatred of hypocrisy and of everything pharisaical. Then suddenly came this house close to the monastery, this regular attendance at church services, and this complete submission to the guidance of the priest, Father Nicodim, though all this was done unostentatiously and with moderation, as if she were somewhat ashamed of it.

When we met it was evident that she wished to avoid all discussion of her reasons for choosing a life of that sort. But I think that I understood.

Although she had a sceptical mind, it was dominated by the fulness of her heart. When, after forty years of household activity, she found that all her children had outgrown the need for her care, she was at a loose end, and it became necessary to seek some fresh occupation for her heart, some fresh outlet for her feelings. Since the homes of her children could not satisfy her cravings, she decided to go into retreat, hoping that she would find the solace which others found in seclusion, the consolation of religion. Though her pride, both on her own account and for the sake of her children, prevented her from giving more than the merest hint of the truth, there could be no doubt that she was unhappy.

I knew all her children, and when I inquired after them she answered reluctantly, for she never blamed them. But I could see what a tragedy, or rather, what a series of tragedies lay buried in her heart.

"Yes, Volodia has done very well," she said. "He is President of the Chamber, and has bought an estate. . . . Yes, his children are growing up — three boys and two girls," and as she stopped talking her black eyebrows were contracted into a frown, and I could see that she was making an effort to prevent herself from expressing her thoughts, trying to rid herself of them.

"Well, and Basil?"

"Basil is just the same; you know the sort of man he is."

"Still devoted to society?"

"Yes."

"Has he any children?"

"Three."

That is how we talked when her sons and daughters were our subject of conversation.

She would rather talk of Peter than of the others. He was the failure of the family—he had squandered all that he had, did not pay his debts, and caused his mother more distress than any of them. But he was her best-beloved in spite of his waywardness, for she saw, as she put it, his "heart of gold."

There is often a peculiar charm about the reminiscences of those who have gone through hidden sorrows, and it was only when we touched on the days of her careless youth that she let herself go. Our last talk was the best of them all, so delightful that I did not leave her home until after midnight. It was full of tender sympathy. It was about Peter Nikiforovich, the first tutor her children ever had. He was a graduate of Moscow University, and he died of consumption in her house. He was a remarkable man, and had exercised a great influence over her.

Though she did not realise it, he was the only man whom she could, or did, love besides her husband.

We talked about him and about his theories of life, views which I had known and shared at the time. He was not exactly a disciple of Rousseau, though he knew and approved of his theories, but he had a mind of the same type. He very much resembled our usual conception of the wise men of antiquity. He was full of the gentle humility of unconscious Christianity. Though he was convinced that he hated the teachings of Christianity, his whole life was one long self-sacrifice. He was obviously wretched when he could find no opportunity to deny himself something for the sake of others, and it must be something that could only be relinquished with suffering and difficulty. Then he was really happy. He was as innocent as a child and as tender as a woman.

There may be some doubt as to whether she loved him; but there could be absolutely no doubt that she was his only love, his idol, for any one who ever saw him in her presence. To banish any shadow of question, it was quite enough to watch his great, round, blue eyes following her every movement, reflecting every shade of expression on her face; frail and attenuated as he was, in his shapeless, ill-fitting coat, it was more than enough to see him draw himself up, to note how

he bent or turned toward the spot which she occupied.

Alexis Nicolaevich, her late husband, knew it, and did not mind in the least, frequently leaving him alone with her and the children for whole evenings. The children knew it. They loved both their mother and their tutor, and thought it only natural that their mother and their tutor should love one another.

Alexis Nicolaevich's only precaution was to call him "Peter the Wise." He, too, loved him and respected him; indeed, he could not help respecting him for his exceptional affectionate devotion to the children, and for the unusual loftiness of his morality; and never for a moment did he think of passion between him and his wife as a possibility. But I am inclined to believe that she did love him. His death was not only a deep grief, but a bereavement. Certain sides of her nature, the best, the fundamental, the most essential, withered away after his death.

So we talked about him, and about his opinions on life; how he had believed that the highest morality lay in taking from others as little as possible, and in giving to others as much as possible of oneself, of one's soul; and how, in order that one might take as little as possible, he believed that one should cultivate what Plato ranked as the

highest virtue, abstinence: that one should sleep on a plank bed, wear the same clothing winter and summer, have bread and water for one's nourishment, or, as a great indulgence, milk. (That was how he had lived, and Marie Alexandrovna thought that that was how he had ruined his health.) He had held that, to equip oneself for giving to others, it was essential to develop one's spiritual forces, chief among which was love, dynamic love, devoted to service in life, to uplifting of life. He would have brought up the children on these lines if he could have had his way; but their parents insisted upon some concession to convention, and an excellent compromise was adopted. But unfortunately, his *régime* did not last long, as he only lived with them for four years.

"Just think of it," said Marie Alexandrovna, "I have taken to reading religious tracts, I listen to Father Nicodim's sermons, and believe me"—here her smiling eyes shone with a glance so bright that it brought to mind the independence of thought which was so characteristic of her—"believe me, all these pious exhortations are infinitely inferior to the sayings of Peter Nikiforovich. They deal with the same things, but on a much lower plane. But, above all, he taught one not so much by precept as by practice. And how did he do it? Why, his whole life was a flame,

and it consumed him. Do you remember when Mitia and Vera had scarlatina — you were staying with us — do you remember how he sat up at night with them, but insisted upon going on with his lessons with the older children during the day? He regarded it as a sacred duty. And then, when Barbara's boy was ill, he did the same thing, and was quite angry because we would not have the child moved to our house. Barbara was talking about him only the other day. Then when Vania, the page boy, broke his bust of some sage or other, do you remember how, after scolding him, he went out of his way to atone for his anger, begged the boy's pardon, and bought him a ticket for the circus. He was a wonderful man. He insisted that the sort of life we led was not worth living, and begged my husband to give up our land to the peasants and to live by his own labour. Alexander only laughed. But the advice had been given quite earnestly, from a sense of duty.

"He had arrived at that conclusion, and he was right. Yet we went on living just as others did, and what was the result? I made a round of visits last year, to all my children except Peter. Well, what did I find? Were they happy? Still it was not possible to alter everything as he wanted. It was not for nothing that the first man fell and that sin came into the world."

That was our last talk. "I have done a great deal of thinking in my loneliness," she said; "indeed, I have done more than thinking; I have done some writing," and she smiled at me with an air of embarrassment that gave her aged face a sweet, wistful expression. "I have put down my thoughts about all these things, or rather, the outcome of my experiences. I kept a diary before I was married, and afterwards too, for a time. But I gave it up later, when it all began, about ten years ago." She did not say what had begun, but I knew that she meant the strained relations with her older children, the misunderstandings, and the contentions. She had had the entire control of the family estate after her husband's death. "In looking through my possessions here I found my old diaries and re-read them. There is a good deal in them that is silly, but there is a good deal that is good, and"—again the same smile—"instructive, too. I could not make up my mind at first whether to burn them or not, so I asked Father Nicodim, and he said, 'Burn them.' But that was all nonsense, you know. He could not understand. So I didn't burn them." How well I recognised her characteristic illogical consistency. She was obedient to Father Nicodim in most things, and had settled near the monastery to be under his guidance; but when she thought that his

judgment was irrational, she did what seemed best to her.

"Not only did I not burn them, I wrote two more volumes. There is nothing to do here, so I wrote what I thought about it all, and when I die — I don't mean to die yet: my mother lived to be seventy, and my father eighty — but when I do die these books are to be sent to you. You are to read them and to decide whether there is anything of real value in them, and if there is, you will let others share it. For no one seems to know. We go on suffering incessantly for our children, from before their birth until the time comes when they begin to insist on their rights. Think of the sleepless nights, the anxiety, the pain and the despair we go through. It would not matter if they really loved us, or even if they were happy. But they don't, and they aren't. I don't care what you say, there is something wrong somewhere. That is what I have written about. You will read it when I am dead. But I have said enough about it."

I promised, though I assured her that I did not expect to outlive her. We parted, and a month later I received the news of her death. Feeling faint at vespers, she had sat down on a little folding stool she carried with her, leaned her head against the wall, and died. It was some sort of

heart trouble. I went to the funeral. All the children were there except Helen, who was abroad, and Mitia — the one who had had scarlatina — who could not go because he was in the Caucasus undergoing a cure for a serious illness.

It was an ostentatious funeral, and its display inspired the monks with more respect for her than they had felt while she was alive. Her belongings were divided up rather as keepsakes than with a view to any intrinsic value. In memory of our friendship, I received her malachite paper-weight as well as six old leather-bound diaries and four new ordinary manuscript books in which, as she had said, she had written "about it all" while living near the monastery.

The book contains this remarkable woman's touching and instructive story.

As I knew her and her husband throughout their life together, and watched the growth and development of her children from the time of their birth to the time of their marriage, I have been able to fill in any omission in her memoirs from my own reminiscences whenever it has seemed necessary to make the story more clear.

THE MEMOIRS OF A MOTHER

THE MEMOIRS OF A MOTHER

It is the 3rd of May 1857, and I begin a new diary. My old one covers a long period, but I did not write it properly; there was too much introspection, too much sentimentality and nonsense — about being in love with Ivan Zakharovich — the desire to be famous, or to enter a convent. I have just read over a good deal that was nice, written when I was fifteen or sixteen. But now it is quite different. I am twenty, and I really am in love and in a state of ecstasy. I do not worry myself with fears as to whether it is real, or whether this is what true love should be, or whether my love is inadequate; on the contrary, I am afraid that this is the real thing, fate; that I love far, far too much, and cannot help loving, and I am afraid. There is something serious and dignified about him — his face, the sound of his voice, his cheery word — in spite of the fact that he is always bright and laughing, and can turn everything round so that it becomes graceful, clever, and humorous. Every one is amused, and so am I; yet there is something solemn about it.

Our eyes meet; they pierce deep, deep down into the other's, and go farther and farther. I am frightened, and I see that he is too.

But I will describe it all in order. He is the son of Anna Pavlovna Lutkovsky, and is related to the Obolenskys and the Mikashins; his eldest brother is the Lutkovsky who distinguished himself at the siege of Sevastopol, and he himself, Alexis,* is mine, yes mine! He was in Sevastopol, too, but only because he did not want to be safe at home when other men were dying there. He is above ambition. After the campaign he left the army, and did some sort of work in Petersburg; now he has come to our province, and is on the Committee. He is young, but he is liked and appreciated. Michel brought him to our house, and he became intimate with us at once. Mother took a fancy to him, and was very friendly. Father, as usual with all young men who wished to marry his daughters, received him coldly. He at once began to pay attention to Madia, the sort of attention men do pay to girls of sixteen; but in my innermost heart I knew at once that it was I, only I did not dare to own it even to myself. He used to come often; and from the first day, although nothing was said, I knew that it was all over — that it was he. Yes-

* "Peter" is the original.

terday, on leaving, he pressed my hand. We were on the landing of the staircase. I do not know why, but I felt that I was blushing. He looked at me, and he blushed also; and lost his head so completely that he turned round and ran downstairs, dropped his hat, picked it up, and stopped outside in the porch.

I went upstairs and looked out of the window. His carriage drove up, but he did not get in. I leaned out to look into the porch. He was standing there, stroking his beard into his mouth, and biting it. I was afraid he might turn round, and so I moved away from the window, and at the same moment I heard his step on the stairs. He was running up quickly, impetuously. How I knew I cannot say, but I went to the door and stood still, waiting. My heart ceased to beat; it seemed to stand still, and my breast heaved painfully, yet joyfully. Why I knew I cannot say. But I knew. He might very well have run upstairs and said, "I beg your pardon, I forgot my cigarettes," or something like that. That might very well have happened. What should I have done then? But no, that was impossible. What was to be — was. His face was solemn, timid, determined, and joyful. His eyes shone, his lips quivered. He had his overcoat on, and held his hat in his hand. We were alone — every one

was on the veranda, "Marie Alexandrovna,"* he said, stopping on the last step, "it's best to have it over once for all than to go on in misery, and perhaps to upset you." I felt ill at ease, but painfully happy. Those dear eyes, that beautiful forehead, those trembling lips, so much more used to smiling, and the timidity of the strong energetic figure! I felt sobs rising to my throat. I expect he saw the expression on my face.

"Marie Alexandrovna,* you know what I want to tell you, don't you?"

"I don't know" . . . I began. "Yes, I do."

"Yes," he went on, "you know what I mean to ask you, and do not dare." He broke off, and then, suddenly, as though angry with himself: "Well, what is to be, will be. Can you love me as I love you; be my wife. Yes or no?"

I could not speak. Joy suffocated me. I held out my hand. He took it and kissed it. "Is it really yes? Truly? Yes? You knew, didn't you. I have suffered so long. I need not go away?"

"No, no."

I said that I loved him, and we kissed; and that first kiss seemed strange and unpleasant rather than pleasant, our lips just touching the other's face,

* "Barbara Nicolaevna" in the original.

as though by chance. He went down and sent away his carriage, and I ran off to mother. She went to father, who came out of his room. It was all over — we were engaged. It was past one when he left, and he will come again tomorrow, and the wedding will be in a month. He wanted it to be next week, but mother would not hear of it.

It was fifty-seven years ago. The war was just over. The Voronov household was busy with wedding preparations. The second daughter, Marie,* was engaged to Alexis Lutkovsky.† They had known each other since childhood.‡ They had played and danced together. Now he had returned from Sevastopol, with the rank of lieutenant.

At the very height of the war he had left the civil service to join a regiment as an ensign. On his return he could not make up his mind what to do. He felt nothing but contempt for military service, especially in the Guards, and did not want to go on with it in time of peace. But an uncle wanted him to be his aide-de-camp in Kiev. A cousin offered him a post at Constantinople. His

* "Barbara" in the original.

† "Evgraf Lotukhine" in the original.

‡ See p. 294 where she says, "Michel introduced him to our house," etc.

ex-chief asked him to go back to his former post. He had plenty of friends and relatives, and they were all fond of him. They were not quite fond enough of him to miss him when he was not there, but they were fond enough to say when he appeared (at least most of them), "Ah, Alexis! * how jolly!" He was never in any one's way, and most people liked to have him about, though for very different reasons. He could tell stories, and sing or play the guitar in first-rate fashion. But, above all, he never gave himself any airs. He was clever, good-looking, good-natured, and sympathetic. While he was looking round and discussing where and with whom he should work, and while he was thinking the matter over and weighing it very carefully, notwithstanding his seeming indifference, he met the Voronovs in Moscow. They invited him to their country-house, where he went and stayed a week; then left, and a week later returned and proposed.

He was accepted with great pleasure. It was a good match. He became engaged.

"There's nothing to be particularly pleased about," said old Voronov to his wife, who was standing near his desk looking at him wistfully.

"He is good-natured."

* "Grisha" in the original.

"Good-natured, indeed! That's not the point. But, as a matter of fact, he has lived: he has lived a good deal. I know the Lutkovsky* stock. What has he got except good intentions and his service? What we can give them will not provide for them."

"But they love one another, and they have been so frank about it," she said. She was so gentle and so mild.

"Yes, of course, he's all right. They're all alike, but I wanted some one better for Marie.† She is such an open-hearted, tender little soul, There was something else I had wished for. But it can't be helped. Come." And they left the room together.

Just at first father seemed displeased. No, not exactly displeased, but sad, not quite himself. I know him. Just as though he did not like him. I cannot understand it; I am not the only one. It is not because I am engaged to him, but nobility, truthfulness, and purity are so clearly written all over his being that one could not find more of them anywhere. It is evident that what is in his mind is on his tongue: he has nothing to hide. He only hides his own noble qualities. He will not, he cannot bear to speak of his Sevastopol ex-

* "Lotukhine" in the original.

† "Barbara" in the original.

plots, nor about Michel. He blushed when I spoke of him. I thank Thee, Lord. I desire nothing, nothing more.

Lutkovsky * went to Moscow to make preparations for the wedding. He stopped at the chevalier, and there on the stairway he met Souschov. "Ah, Alexis,† is it true that you are going to get married?"

"Yes, it is true."

"I congratulate you. I know them. It is a charming family. I knew your bride too. She is beautiful. Let us have dinner together."

They dined together, and had first one bottle, then a second.

"Let's be off. Let's drive somewhere; there's nothing else to do."

They drove to the Hermitage, which had only just been opened. As they approached the theatre they met Anna. Anna did not know; but even if she had known he was going to be married, she would not have altered her manner, and would have smiled and shown her dimples with even more delight.

"Oh, there, how dull you are; come along!" She took his hand.

* "Lotukhine" in the original.

† "Grisha" in the original.

"Take care," said Souschov behind them.
"Directly, directly."

Lutkovsky * walked as far as the theatre with her, and then handed her over to Basil, whom he happened to meet there.

"No, it is wrong. I will go home. Why did I come?"

Notwithstanding urgent requests to remain, he went home. In his hotel room he drank two glasses of seltzer water, and sat down at the table to make up his accounts. In the morning he had to go out on business — to borrow money. His brother had refused to lend him any, and so he had got it from a money-lender. He sat there making his calculations, and all the while his thoughts returned to Anna, and he felt annoyed that he had refused her, though he felt proud that he had done so.

He took out Marie's † photograph. She was a strong, well-developed, slender Russian beauty. He looked at the picture with admiration, then put it in front of him and went on with his work.

Suddenly in the corridor he heard the voices of Anna and Souschov. He was leading her straight to his door.

* "Lotukhine" in the original.

† "Barbara's" in the original.

"Alexis,* how could you?"

She entered his room.

Next morning Lutkovsky † went to breakfast with Souschov, who reproached him.

"You must know how terribly this would grieve her."

"Of course I do. Don't worry. I am as dumb as a fish. May I — Alexis ‡ has returned from Moscow, the same clear, child-like soul. I see he is unhappy because he is not rich, for my sake — only for my sake. Last night the conversation turned on children, on our future children. I cannot believe I shall have children, or even one child. It is impossible. I shall die of happiness. Oh, but if I had them, how could I love them and him? The two things do not go together. Well, what is to be will be."

A month later the wedding took place. In the autumn Lutkovsky § got a post in the Civil Service, and they went to St. Petersburg. In September they discovered that she was going to be a mother, and in March her first son was born.

The accouchement, as is usually the case, was unexpected, and confusion ensued just because

* "Grisha" in the original.

† "Lotukhine" in the original.

‡ "Grisha" in the original.

§ "Lotukhine" in the original.

every one had wanted to foresee everything, and things actually turned out quite different.

[This is only a fragment, and contains some inconsistencies and some confusion in the names, which have been corrected.—

EDITOR.]

FATHER VASILY: A FRAGMENT

FATHER VASILY: A FRAGMENT

IT was autumn. Before daybreak a cart rattled over the road, which was in bad repair, and drove up to Father Vasily's double-fronted thatched house. A peasant in a cap, with the collar of his kaftan turned up, jumped out of the cart, and, turning his horse round, knocked with his big whip at the window of the room which he knew to be that of the priest's cook.

"Who's there?"

"I want the priest."

"What for?"

"For some one who is sick."

"Where do you come from?"

"From Vozdrevo."

A man struck a light, and, coming out into the yard, opened the gate for the peasant.

The priest's wife — a short, stout woman, dressed in a quilted jacket, with a shawl over her head and felt boots on her feet — came out and began to speak in an angry, hoarse voice.

"What evil spirit has brought you here?"

"I have come for the priest."

"What are you servants thinking about? You haven't lit the fire yet."

"Is it time yet?"

"If it were not time I shouldn't say anything."

The peasant from Vozdrevo went to the kitchen, crossed himself before the ikon, and, making a low bow to the priest's wife, sat down on a bench near the door.

The peasant's wife had been suffering a long time; and, having given birth to a still-born child, was now at the point of death.

While gazing at what was going on in the hut he sat busily thinking how he should carry off the priest. Should he drive him across the Kossoe, as he had come, or should he go round another way? The road was bad near the village. The river was frozen over, but was not strong enough to bear. He had hardly been able to get across.

A labourer came in and threw down an armful of birch logs near the stove, asking the peasant to break up some of it to light the fire, whereupon the peasant took off his coat and set to work.

The priest awoke, as he always did, full of life and spirits. While still in bed, he crossed himself and said his favourite prayer, "To the King of Heaven," and repeated "Lord have mercy on us" several times. Getting up, he washed, brushed his long hair, put on his boots and an old cassock,

and then, standing before the ikons, began his morning prayers. When he reached the middle of the Lord's Prayer, and had come to the words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," he stopped, remembering the deacon who was drunk the day before, and who on meeting him muttered audibly, "Hypocrite, Pharisee." These words, Pharisee and hypocrite, pained Father Vasily particularly because, although conscious of having many faults, he did *not* believe hypocrisy to be one of them. He was angry with the deacon. "Yes, I forgive," he said to himself; "God be with him," and he continued his prayers. The words, "Lead us not into temptation," reminded him how he had felt when hot tea with rum had been handed to him the night before after vespers in the house of a rich landowner.

Having said his prayers he glanced at himself in a little mirror which distorted everything, and passed his hands over his smooth, fair hair, which grew in a circle round a moderately large bald patch, and then he looked with pleasure at his broad, kind face, with its thin beard, which looked young in spite of his forty-two years. After this he went into the sitting-room, where he found his wife hurriedly and with difficulty bringing in the samovar, which was on the point of boiling over.

"Why do you do that yourself? Where's Thekla?"

"Why do you do it yourself?" mocked his wife. "Who else is to do it?"

"But why so early?"

"A man from Vozdrevo has come to fetch you. His wife is dying."

"Has he been here long?"

"Yes, some time."

"Why was I not called before?"

Father Vasily drank his tea without milk (it was Friday); and then, taking the sacred elements, put on his fur coat and cap and went out into the porch with a resolute air. The peasant was awaiting for him there. "Good-morning, Mitri," said Father Vasily, and turning up his sleeve, made the sign of the cross, after which he stretched out his small strong hand with its short cut nails for him to kiss, and walked out on to the steps. The sun had risen, but was not yet visible behind the overhanging clouds. The peasant brought the cart out from the yard, and drove up to the front door. Father Vasily stepped quickly on the axle of the back wheel and sat down on the seat, which was bound round with hay. Mitri getting in beside him, whipped up the big-barrelled mare with its drooping ears, and the cart rattled over the frozen mud. A fine snow was falling.

II

Father Vasily's family consisted of his wife, her mother — (the widow of the former priest of the parish), and three children — two sons and a daughter. The eldest son had finished his course at the seminary, and was now preparing to enter the university; the second son — the mother's favourite, a boy of fifteen — was still at the seminary, and his sixteen-year-old daughter, Lena, lived at home, though discontented with her lot, doing little to help her mother. Father Vasily himself had studied at the seminary in his youth, and had done so brilliantly that, when he left in 1840, he was at the top of his class. He then began to prepare for entrance into the ecclesiastical academy, and even dreamt of a professorship, or of a bishopric. But his mother, the widow of a verger, with three daughters and an elder son who drank — lived in the greatest poverty. The step he took at that time gave a suggestion of self-sacrifice and renunciation to his whole life. To please his mother he left the academy, and became a village priest. He did this out of love for his mother though he never confessed it to himself, but ascribed his decision to indolence and dislike for intellectual pursuits. The place to which he was presented was a living

in a small village, and was offered to him on condition that he would marry the former priest's daughter.* The living was not a rich one, for the old priest had been poor and had left a widow and two daughters in distress. Anna, by whose aid he was to obtain the living, was a plain girl, but bright in every sense of the word. She literally fascinated Vasily and forced him to marry her, which he did. So he became Father Vasily, first wearing his hair short and afterwards long, and he lived happily with his wife, Anna Tikhonovna, for twenty-two years. Notwithstanding her romantic attachment to a student, the son of a former deacon, he was as kind to her as ever, as if he loved her still more tenderly, and wished to atone for the angry feelings which her attachment to the student had awakened in him.

It had afforded him an opportunity for the same self-sacrifice and self-denial; the result of which was that he gave up the academy, and felt a calm, almost unconscious, inner joy.

III

At first the two men drove on in silence. The road through the village was so uneven that al-

* The custom of giving a living to a son-in-law is universal in Russia. The living is usually the dowry of the youngest daughter.

though they moved slowly the cart was thrown from side to side, while the priest kept sliding off his seat, settling himself again and wrapping his cloak round him.

It was only after they had left the village behind, and crossed over the trench into the meadow that the priest spoke.

"Is your wife very bad?" he asked.

"We don't expect her to live," answered the peasant reluctantly.

"It is in God's, not man's hands. It is God's will," said the priest. "There is nothing for it but to submit."

The peasant raised his head and glanced at the priest's face. Apparently he was on the point of making an angry rejoinder, but the kind look which met his eyes disarmed him — so shaking his head he only said: "It may be God's will, but it is very hard on me, Father. I am alone. What will become of my little ones?"

"Don't be faint-hearted — God will protect them." The peasant did not reply, but swearing at the mare, who had changed from a trot into a slow walk, he pulled the rope reins sharply.

They entered a forest where the tracks were all equally bad, and drove along in silence for some time, trying to pick out the best of them. It was only after they had passed through the forest,

and were on the high road which led through fields bright with springing shoots of the autumn-sown corn, that the priest spoke again.

"There is promise of a good crop," he said.

"Not bad," answered the peasant, and was silent. All further attempts at conversation on the part of the priest were in vain.

They reached the patient's house about breakfast-time.

The woman, who was still alive, had ceased to suffer, but lay on her bed too weak to move, her expressive eyes alone showing that life was not yet extinct. She gazed at the priest with a look of entreaty, and kept her eyes fixed on him alone. An old woman stood near her, and the children were up on the stove. The eldest girl, a child of ten, dressed in a loose shirt, was standing, as if she were grown up, at a table near the bed, and resting her chin on her right hand, and supporting the right arm with her left, silently stared at her mother. The priest went to the bedside and administered the sacrament, and turning towards the ikon, began to pray. The old woman drew near to the dying woman, and looking at her shook her head and then covered her face with a piece of linen; after which she approached the priest, and put a coin into his hand. He knew

it was a five kopek * piece, and accepted it. At that moment the husband came into the hut.

"Is she dead?" he asked.

"She is dying," said the old woman.

On hearing this the girl burst into tears, muttering something. The three children on the stove began to howl in chorus.

The peasant crossed himself, and going up to his wife, uncovered her face and looked at her. The white face was calm and still. He stood over the dead woman for a few minutes, then tenderly covered the face again, and crossing himself several times, turned to the priest and said,—

"Shall we start?"

"Yes, we had better go."

"All right. I'll just water the mare." And he left the hut.

The old woman began a wailing chant about the orphans left motherless, with no one to feed or clothe them, comparing them to young birds who have fallen from their nest. At every verse of her chant she breathed heavily, and was more and more carried away by her own wailing. The priest listened, and became sad and sorry for the children and wanted to help them. He felt for his purse in the pocket of his cassock, remember-

* About three half-pence.

ing that he had a half-rouble (about a shilling) coin in it, which he had received from the landowner at whose house he had said vespers the evening before. He had not found time to hand it over to his wife, as he always did with his money; and, regardless of the consequences, he took out the coin, and showing it to the old woman, put it on the window-sill.

The peasant came in without his coat on and said that he had asked a friend to drive the priest back, as he had to go himself to fetch some boards for the coffin.

IV

Theodore, the friend who drove Father Vasily back, was a sociable, merry giant with red hair and a red beard. His son had just been taken as a recruit, and to celebrate the event, Theodore had had a drink, and was therefore in a particularly happy frame of mind.

"Mitri's mare was tired out," he said; "why not help a friend? Why not help a friend? We ought to be kind to one another, oughtn't we? Now then, my beauty!" he shouted to the bay horse with its tightly plaited tail, and touched it with the whip.

"Gently, gently," said Father Vasily, shaken as he was by the jolting.

"Well, we can go slower. Is she dead?"

"Yes, she is at rest," said the priest.

The red-haired man wanted to express his sympathy, but he also wanted to have a joke.

"God's taken one wife, He'll send another," he said, wishing to have a laugh.

"Oh, it is terribly sad for the poor fellow!" said the priest.

"Of course it is. He is poor and has no one to help him. He came to me and said, 'Take the priest home, will you; my mare can't do any more.' We must help one another, mustn't we?"

"You've been drinking, I see. It's wrong of you, Theodore. It's a working-day."

"Do you think I drank at the expense of others? I drank at my own. I was seeing my son off. Forgive me, Father, for God's sake."

"It is not my business to forgive. I only say it is better not to drink."

"Of course it is, but what am I to do? If I were just nobody — but, thank God, I am well off. I live openly. I am sorry for Mitri. Who could help being sorry for him? Why, only last year some one stole his horse. Oh, you have to keep a sharp eye on folk nowadays."

Theodore began a long story about some horses

that were stolen from a fair; how one was killed for the sake of its skin — but the thief was caught and was beaten black and blue, said Theodore, with evident satisfaction.

“They ought not to have beaten him.”

“Do you think they ought to have patted him on the back?”

While conversing in this manner they reached Father Vasily's house.

Father Vasily wanted to go to his room and rest, but during his absence two letters had come — one from his son, one from the bishop. The bishop's circular was of no importance, but the son's letter gave rise to a stormy scene, which increased when his wife asked him for the half-rouble and found that he had given it away. Her anger grew, but the real cause was the boy's letter and their inability to satisfy his demands — due entirely to her husband's carelessness, she thought.

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THE END

THE FORGED COUPON

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INTRODUCTION

IN an age of materialism like our own the phenomenon of spiritual power is as significant and inspiring as it is rare. No longer associated with the "divine right" of kings, it has survived the downfall of feudal and theocratic systems as a mystic personal emanation in place of a coercive weapon of statecraft.

Freed from its ancient shackles of dogma and despotism it eludes analysis. We know not how to gauge its effect on others, nor even upon ourselves. Like the wind, it permeates the atmosphere we breathe, and baffles while it stimulates the mind with its intangible but compelling force.

This psychic power, which the dead weight of materialism is impotent to suppress, is revealed in the lives and writings of men of the most diverse creeds and nationalities. Apart from those who, like Buddha and Mahomet, have been raised to the height of demi-gods by worshipping millions, there are names which leap inevitably to the mind — such names as Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, Rousseau — which stand for types and exemplars of spiritual aspiration. To this high

priesthood of the quick among the dead, who can doubt that time will admit Leo Tolstoy — a genius whose greatness has been obscured from us rather than enhanced by his duality; a realist who strove to demolish the mysticism of Christianity, and became himself a mystic in the contemplation of Nature; a man of ardent temperament and robust physique, keenly susceptible to human passions and desires, who battled with himself from early manhood until the spirit, gathering strength with years, inexorably subdued the flesh.

Tolstoy the realist steps without cavil into the front rank of modern writers; Tolstoy the idealist has been constantly derided and scorned by men of like birth and education with himself — his altruism denounced as impracticable, his preaching compared with his mode of life to prove him inconsistent, if not insincere. This is the prevailing attitude of politicians and literary men.

Must one conclude that the mass of mankind has lost touch with idealism? On the contrary, in spite of modern materialism, or even because of it, many leaders of spiritual thought have arisen in our times, and have won the ear of vast audiences. Their message is a call to a simpler life, to a recognition of the responsibilities of wealth, to the avoidance of war by arbitration, and sinking of class hatred in a deep sense of universal brotherhood.

Unhappily, when an idealistic creed is formulated in precise and dogmatic language, it invariably loses something of its pristine beauty in the process of transmutation. Hence the Positivist philosophy of Comte, though embodying noble aspirations, has had but a limited influence. Again, the poetry of Robert Browning, though less frankly altruistic than that of Cowper or Wordsworth, is inherently ethical, and reveals strong sympathy with sinning and suffering humanity, but it is masked by a manner that is sometimes uncouth and frequently obscure. Owing to these, and other instances, idealism suggests to the world at large a vague sentimentality peculiar to the poets, a bloodless abstraction toyed with by philosophers, which must remain a closed book to struggling humanity.

Yet Tolstoy found true idealism in the toiling peasant who believed in God, rather than in his intellectual superior who believed in himself in the first place, and gave a conventional assent to the existence of a deity in the second. For the peasant was still religious at heart with a naïve unquestioning faith — more characteristic of the fourteenth or fifteenth century than of to-day — and still fervently aspired to God although sunk in superstition and held down by the despotism of the Greek Church. It was the cumbrous ritual and dogma of the orthodox state religion which roused

Tolstoy to impassioned protests, and led him step by step to separate the core of Christianity from its sacerdotal shell, thus bringing upon himself the ban of excommunication.

The signal mark of the reprobation of "Holy Synod" was slow in coming — it did not, in fact, become absolute until a couple of years after the publication of "Resurrection," in 1901, in spite of the attitude of fierce hostility to Church and State which Tolstoy had maintained for so long. This hostility, of which the seeds were primarily sown by the closing of his school and inquisition of his private papers in the summer of 1862, soon grew to proportions far greater than those arising from a personal wrong. The dumb and submissive moujik found in Tolstoy a living voice to express his sufferings.

Tolstoy was well fitted by nature and circumstances to be the peasant's spokesman. He had been brought into intimate contact with him in the varying conditions of peace and war, and he knew him at his worst and best. The old home of the family, Yasnaya Polyana, where Tolstoy, his brothers and sister, spent their early years in charge of two guardian aunts, was not only a halting-place for pilgrims journeying to and from the great monastic shrines, but gave shelter to a number of persons of enfeebled minds belonging to

the peasant class, with whom the devout and kindly Aunt Alexandra spent many hours daily in religious conversation and prayer.

In "Childhood" Tolstoy apostrophises with feeling one of those "innocents," a man named Grisha, "whose faith was so strong that you felt the nearness of God, your love so ardent that the words flowed from your lips uncontrolled by your reason. And how did you celebrate his Majesty when, words failing you, you prostrated yourself on the ground, bathed in tears." This picture of humble religious faith was amongst Tolstoy's earliest memories, and it returned to comfort him and uplift his soul when it was tossed and engulfed by seas of doubt. But the affection he felt in boyhood towards the moujiks became tinged with contempt when his attempts to improve their condition — some of which are described in "Anna Karenina" and in the "Landlord's Morning" — ended in failure, owing to the ignorance and obstinacy of the people. It was not till he passed through the ordeal of war in Turkey and the Crimea that he discovered in the common soldier who fought by his side an unconscious heroism, an unquestioning faith in God, a kindliness and simplicity of heart rarely possessed by his commanding officer.

The impressions made upon Tolstoy during

this period of active service gave vivid reality to the battle-scenes in "War and Peace," and are traceable in the reflections and conversation of the two heroes, Prince André and Pierre Besukhov. On the eve of the battle of Borodino, Prince André, talking with Pierre in the presence of his devoted soldier-servant Timokhine, says,—

" 'Success cannot possibly be, nor has it ever been, the result of strategy or fire-arms or numbers.'

" 'Then what does it result from?' said Pierre.

" 'From the feeling that is in me, that is in him' — pointing to Timokhine — 'and that is in each individual soldier.' "

He then contrasts the different spirit animating the officers and the men.

" 'The former,' he says, 'have nothing in view but their personal interests. The critical moment for them is the moment at which they are able to supplant a rival, to win a cross or a new order. I see only one thing. To-morrow one hundred thousand Russians and one hundred thousand Frenchmen will meet to fight; they who fight the hardest and spare themselves the least will win the day.'

" 'There's the truth, your Excellency, the real

truth,' murmurs Timokhine; 'it is not a time to spare oneself. Would you believe it, the men of my battalion have not tasted brandy? "It's not a day for that," they said.' "

During the momentous battle which followed, Pierre was struck by the steadfastness under fire which has always distinguished the Russian soldier.

"The fall of each man acted as an increasing stimulus. The faces of the soldiers brightened more and more, as if challenging the storm let loose on them."

In contrast with this picture of fine "morale" is that of the young white-faced officer, looking nervously about him as he walks backwards with lowered sword.

In other places Tolstoy does full justice to the courage and patriotism of all grades in the Russian army, but it is constantly evident that his sympathies are most heartily with the rank and file. What genuine feeling and affection rings in this sketch of Plato, a common soldier, in "War and Peace!"

"Plato Karataev was about fifty, judging by the number of campaigns in which he had served; he could not have told his exact age himself, and when he laughed, as he often did, he showed two rows of strong, white teeth. There was not a

grey hair on his head or in his beard, and his bearing wore the stamp of activity, resolution, and above all, stoicism. His face, though much lined, had a touching expression of simplicity, youth, and innocence. When he spoke, in his soft sing-song voice, his speech flowed as from a well-spring. He never thought about what he had said or was going to say next, and the vivacity and the rhythmical inflections of his voice gave it a penetrating persuasiveness. Night and morning, when going to rest or getting up, he said, 'O God, let me sleep like a stone and rise up like a loaf.' And, sure enough, he had no sooner lain down than he slept like a lump of lead, and in the morning on waking he was bright and lively, and ready for any work. He could do anything, just not very well nor very ill; he cooked, sewed, planed wood, cobbled his boots, and was always occupied with some job or other, only allowing himself to chat and sing at night. He sang, not like a singer who knows he has listeners, but as the birds sing to God, the Father of all, feeling it as necessary as walking or stretching himself. His singing was tender, sweet, plaintive, almost feminine, in keeping with his serious countenance. When, after some weeks of captivity his beard had grown again, he seemed to have got rid of all that was not his true self, the borrowed face

which his soldiering life had given him, and to have become, as before, a peasant and a man of the people. In the eyes of the other prisoners Plato was just a common soldier, whom they chaffed at times and sent on all manner of errands; but to Pierre he remained ever after the personification of simplicity and truth, such as he had divined him to be since the first night spent by his side."

This clearly is a study from life, a leaf from Tolstoy's "Crimean Journal." It harmonises with the point of view revealed in the "Letters from Sebastopol" (especially in the second and third series), and shows, like them, the change effected by the realities of war in the intolerant young aristocrat, who previously excluded all but the *comme-il-faut* from his consideration. With widened outlook and new ideals he returned to St. Petersburg at the close of the Crimean campaign, to be welcomed by the *élite* of letters and courted by society. A few years before he would have been delighted with such a reception. Now it jarred on his awakened sense of the tragedy of existence. He found himself entirely out of sympathy with the group of literary men who gathered round him, with Turgenev at their head. In Tolstoy's eyes they were false, paltry, and

immoral, and he was at no pains to disguise his opinions. Dissension, leading to violent scenes, soon broke out between Turgenev and Tolstoy; and the latter, completely disillusioned both in regard to his great contemporary and to the literary world of St. Petersburg, shook off the dust of the capital, and, after resigning his commission in the army, went abroad on a tour through Germany, Switzerland, and France.

In France his growing aversion from capital punishment became intensified by his witnessing a public execution, and the painful thoughts aroused by the scene of the guillotine haunted his sensitive spirit for long. He left France for Switzerland, and there, among beautiful natural surroundings, and in the society of friends, he enjoyed a respite from mental strain.

“A fresh, sweet-scented flower seemed to have blossomed in my spirit; to the weariness and indifference to all things which before possessed me had succeeded, without apparent transition, a thirst for love, a confident hope, an inexplicable joy to feel myself alive.”

Those halcyon days ushered in the dawn of an intimate friendship between himself and a lady who in the correspondence which ensued usually styled herself his aunt, but was in fact a second



Tolstoy as an Officer.



cousin. This lady, the Countess Alexandra A. Tolstoy, a Maid of Honour of the Bedchamber, moved exclusively in Court circles. She was intelligent and sympathetic, but strictly orthodox and *mondaine*, so that, while Tolstoy's view of life gradually shifted from that of an aristocrat to that of a social reformer, her own remained unaltered; with the result that at the end of some forty years of frank and affectionate interchange of ideas, they awoke to the painful consciousness that the last link of mutual understanding had snapped and that their friendship was at an end.

But the letters remain as a valuable and interesting record of one of Tolstoy's rare friendships with women, revealing in his unguarded confidences fine shades of his many-sided nature, and throwing light on the impression he made both on his intimates and on those to whom he was only known as a writer, while his moral philosophy was yet in embryo. They are now about to appear in book form under the auspices of M. Stakhovich, to whose kindness in giving me free access to the originals I am indebted for the extracts which follow. From one of the countess's first letters we learn that the feelings of affection, hope, and happiness which possessed Tolstoy in Switzerland irresistibly communicated themselves to those about him.

"You are good in a very uncommon way," she writes, "and that is why it is difficult to feel unhappy in your company. I have never seen you without wishing to be a better creature. Your presence is a consoling idea. . . . I know all the elements in you that revive one's heart, possibly without your being even aware of it."

A few years later she gives him an amusing account of the impression his writings had already made on an eminent statesman.

"I owe you a small episode. Not long ago, when lunching with the Emperor, I sat next our little Bismarck, and in a spirit of mischief I began sounding him about you. But I had hardly uttered your name when he went off at a gallop with the greatest enthusiasm, firing off the list of your perfections left and right, and so long as he declaimed your praises with gesticulations, cut and thrust, powder and shot, it was all very well and quite in character; but seeing that I listened with interest and attention my man took the bit in his teeth, and flung himself into a psychic apothecosis. On reaching full pitch he began to get muddled, and floundered so helplessly in his own phrases! all the while chewing an excellent cutlet to the bone, that at last I realised nothing but the tips of his ears — those two great ears of his.

What a pity I can't repeat it verbatim! but how? There was nothing left but a jumble of confused sounds and broken words."

Tolstoy on his side is equally expansive, and in the early stages of the correspondence falls occasionally into the vein of self-analysis which in later days became habitual.

"As a child I believed with passion and without any thought. Then at the age of fourteen I began to think about life and preoccupied myself with religion, but it did not adjust itself to my theories and so I broke with it. Without it I was able to live quite contentedly for ten years . . . everything in my life was evenly distributed, and there was no room for religion. Then came a time when everything grew intelligible; there were no more secrets in life, but life itself had lost its significance."

He goes on to tell of the two years that he spent in the Caucasus before the Crimean War, when his mind, jaded by youthful excesses, gradually regained its freshness, and he awoke to a sense of communion with Nature which he retained to his life's end.

"I have my notes of that time, and now read-

ing them over I am not able to understand how a man could attain to the state of mental exaltation which I arrived at. It was a torturing but a happy time."

Further on he writes,—

"In those two years of intellectual work, I discovered a truth which is ancient and simple, but which yet I know better than others do. I found out that immortal life is a reality, that love is a reality, and that one must live for others if one would be unceasingly happy."

At this point one realises the gulf which divides the Slavonic from the English temperament. No average Englishman of seven-and-twenty (as Tolstoy was then) would pursue reflections of this kind, or if he did, he would in all probability keep them sedulously to himself.

To Tolstoy and his aunt, on the contrary, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to indulge in egoistic abstractions and to expatiate on them; for a Russian feels none of the Anglo-Saxon's *mauvaise honte* in describing his spiritual condition, and is no more daunted by metaphysics than the latter is by arguments on politics and sport.

To attune the Anglo-Saxon reader's mind to sympathy with a mentality so alien to his own, requires that Tolstoy's environment should be described more fully than most of his biographers have cared to do. This prefatory note aims, therefore, at being less strictly biographical than illustrative of the contributory elements and circumstances which sub-consciously influenced Tolstoy's spiritual evolution, since it is apparent that in order to judge a man's actions justly one must be able to appreciate the motives from which they spring; those motives in turn requiring the key which lies in his temperament, his associations, his nationality. Such a key is peculiarly necessary to English or American students of Tolstoy, because of the marked contrast existing between the Russian and the Englishman or American in these respects, a contrast by which Tolstoy himself was forcibly struck during the visit to Switzerland, of which mention has been already made. It is difficult to restrain a smile at the poignant mental discomfort endured by the sensitive Slav in the company of the frigid and silent English frequenters of the Schweitzerhof ("Journal of Prince D. Nekhludov." Lucerne, 1857), whose reserve, he realised, was "not based on pride, but on the absence of any desire to draw nearer to each other"; while he looked back regretfully to the

pension in Paris where the *table d' hôte* was a scene of spontaneous gaiety. The problem of British taciturnity passed his comprehension; but for us the enigma of Tolstoy's temperament is half solved if we see him not harshly silhouetted against a blank wall, but suffused with his native atmosphere, amid his native surroundings. Not till we understand the main outlines of the Russian temperament can we realise the individuality of Tolstoy himself: the personality that made him lovable, the universality that made him great.

So vast an agglomeration of races as that which constitutes the Russian empire cannot obviously be represented by a single type, but it will suffice for our purposes to note the characteristics of the inhabitants of Great Russia among whom Tolstoy spent the greater part of his lifetime and to whom he belonged by birth and natural affinities.

It may be said of the average Russian that in exchange for a precocious childhood he retains much of a child's lightness of heart throughout his later years, alternating with attacks of morbid despondency. He is usually very susceptible to feminine charm, an ardent but unstable lover, whose passions are apt to be as shortlived as they are violent. Story-telling and long-winded discussions give him keen enjoyment, for he is garrulous, metaphysical, and argumentative. In

money matters careless and extravagant, dilatory and venal in affairs; fond, especially in the peasant class, of singing, dancing, and carousing; but his irresponsible gaiety and heedlessness of consequences balanced by a fatalistic courage and endurance in the face of suffering and danger. Capable, besides, of high flights of idealism, which result in epics, but rarely in actions, owing to the Slavonic inaptitude for sustained and organised effort. The Englishman by contrast appears cold and calculating, incapable of rising above questions of practical utility; neither interested in other men's antecedents and experiences nor willing to retail his own. The catechism which Plato puts Pierre through on their first encounter ("War and Peace") as to his family, possessions, and what not, are precisely similar to those to which I have been subjected over and over again by chance acquaintances in country-houses or by fellow travellers on journeys by boat or train. The *naïveté* and kindliness of the questioner makes it impossible to resent, though one may feebly try to parry his probing. On the other hand he offers you free access to the inmost recesses of his own soul, and stupefies you with the candour of his revelations. This, of course, relates more to the landed and professional classes than to the peasant, who is slower to express him-

self, and combines in a curious way a firm belief in the omnipotence and wisdom of his social superiors with a rooted distrust of their intentions regarding himself. He is like a beast of burden who flinches from every approach, expecting always a kick or a blow. On the other hand, his affection for the animals who share his daily work is one of the most attractive points in his character, and one which Tolstoy never wearied of emphasising — describing, with the simple pathos of which he was master, the moujik inured to his own privations but pitiful to his horse, shielding him from the storm with his own coat, or saving him from starvation with his own meagre ration; and mindful of him even in his prayers, invoking, like Plato, the blessings of Florus and Laura, patron saints of horses, because “one mustn’t forget the animals.”

The characteristics of a people so embedded in the soil bear a closer relation to their native landscape than our own migratory populations, and patriotism with them has a deep and vital meaning, which is expressed unconsciously in their lives.

This spirit of patriotism which Tolstoy repudiated is none the less the animating power of the noble epic, “War and Peace,” and of his peasant-tales, of his rare gift of reproducing the expressive

Slav vernacular, and of his magical art of infusing his pictures of Russian scenery not merely with beauty, but with spiritual significance. I can think of no prose writer, unless it be Thoreau, so wholly under the spell of Nature as Tolstoy; and while Thoreau was preoccupied with the normal phenomena of plant and animal life, Tolstoy, coming near to Pantheism, found responses to his moods in trees, and gained spiritual expansion from the illimitable skies and plains. He frequently brings his heroes into touch with Nature, and endows them with all the innate mysticism of his own temperament, for to him Nature was "a guide to God." So in the two-fold incident of Prince André and the oak tree ("War and Peace") the Prince, though a man of action rather than of sentiment and habitually cynical, is ready to find in the aged oak by the roadside, in early spring, an animate embodiment of his own despondency.

" ' Springtime, love, happiness? — are you still cherishing those deceptive illusions? ' the old oak seemed to say. ' Isn't it the same fiction ever? There is neither spring, nor love, nor happiness! Look at those poor weather-beaten firs, always the same . . . look at the knotty arms issuing from all up my poor mutilated trunk — here I

am, such as they have made me, and I do not believe either in your hopes or in your illusions.' ”

And after thus exercising his imagination, Prince André still casts backward glances as he passes by,

“ but the oak maintained its obstinate and sullen immovability in the midst of the flowers and grass growing at its feet. ‘ Yes, that oak is right, right a thousand times over. One must leave illusions to youth. But the rest of us know what life is worth; it has nothing left to offer us.’ ”

Six weeks later he returns homeward the same way, roused from his melancholy torpor by his recent meeting with Natasha.

“ The day was hot, there was storm in the air; a slight shower watered the dust on the road and the grass in the ditch; the left side of the wood remained in the shade; the right side, lightly stirred by the wind, glittered all wet in the sun; everything was in flower, and from near and far the nightingales poured forth their song. ‘ I fancy there was an oak here that understood me,’ said Prince André to himself, looking to the left and attracted unawares by the beauty of the very tree he sought. The transformed old oak spread

out in a dome of deep, luxuriant, blooming verdure, which swayed in a light breeze in the rays of the setting sun. There were no longer cloven branches nor rents to be seen; its former aspect of bitter defiance and sullen grief had disappeared; there were only the young leaves, full of sap that had pierced through the centenarian bark, making the beholder question with surprise if this patriarch had really given birth to them. 'Yes, it is he, indeed!' cried Prince André, and he felt his heart suffused by the intense joy which the springtime and this new life gave him . . . 'No, my life cannot end at thirty-one! . . . It is not enough myself to feel what is within me, others must know it too! Pierre and that "slip" of a girl, who would have fled into cloudland, must learn to know me! My life must colour theirs, and their lives must mingle with mine!'"

In letters to his wife, to intimate friends, and in his diary, Tolstoy's love of Nature is oftentimes expressed. The hair shirt of the ascetic and the prophet's mantle fall from his shoulders, and all the poet in him wakes when, "with a feeling akin to ecstasy," he looks up from his smooth-running sledge at "the enchanting, starry winter sky overhead," or in early spring feels on a ramble "intoxicated by the beauty of the morn-

ing," while he notes that the buds are swelling on the lilacs, and "the birds no longer sing at random," but have begun to converse.

But though such allusions abound in his diary and private correspondence, we must turn to "The Cossacks," and "Conjugal Happiness" for the exquisitely elaborated rural studies, which give those early romances their fresh idyllic charm.

What is interesting to note is that this artistic freshness and joy in Nature coexisted with acute intermittent attacks of spiritual lassitude. In "The Cossacks," the doubts, the mental gropings of Olenine — whose personality but thinly veils that of Tolstoy — haunt him betimes even among the delights of the Caucasian woodland; Serge, the fatalistic hero of "Conjugal Happiness," calmly acquiesces in the inevitableness of "love's sad satiety" amid the scent of roses and the songs of nightingales.

Doubt and despondency, increased by the vexations and failures attending his philanthropic endeavours, at length obsessed Tolstoy to the verge of suicide.

"The disputes over arbitration had become so painful to me, the schoolwork so vague, my doubts arising from the wish to teach others, while dissembling my own ignorance of what should be

taught, were so heartrending that I fell ill. I might then have reached the despair to which I all but succumbed fifteen years later, if there had not been a side of life as yet unknown to me which promised me salvation: this was family life" ("My Confession").

In a word, his marriage with Mademoiselle Sophie Andréevna Bers (daughter of Dr. Bers of Moscow) was consummated in the autumn of 1862 — after a somewhat protracted courtship, owing to her extreme youth — and Tolstoy entered upon a period of happiness and mental peace such as he had never known. His letters of this period to Countess A. A. Tolstoy, his friend Fet, and others, ring with enraptured allusions to his new-found joy. Lassitude and indecision, mysticism and altruism, all were swept aside by the impetus of triumphant love and of all-sufficing conjugal happiness. When in June of the following year a child was born, and the young wife, her features suffused with "a supernatural beauty" lay trying to smile at the husband who knelt sobbing beside her, Tolstoy must have realised that for once his prophetic intuition had been unequal to its task. If his imagination could have conceived in prenuptial days what depths of emotion might be awakened by fatherhood, he

would not have treated the birth of Masha's first child in "Conjugal Happiness" as a trivial material event, in no way affecting the mutual relations of the disillusioned pair. He would have understood that at this supreme crisis, rather than in the vernal hour of love's avowal, the heart is illumined with a joy which is fated "never to return."

The parting of the ways, so soon reached by Serge and Masha, was in fact delayed in Tolstoy's own life by his wife's intelligent assistance in his literary work as an untiring amanuensis, and in the mutual anxieties and pleasures attending the care of a large family of young children. Wider horizons opened to his mental vision, his whole being was quickened and invigorated. "War and Peace," "Anna Karenina," all the splendid fruit of the teeming years following upon his marriage, bear witness to the stimulus which his genius had received. His dawning recognition of the power and extent of female influence appears incidentally in the sketches of high society in those two masterpieces as well as in the eloquent closing passages of "What then must we do?" (1886). Having affirmed that "it is women who form public opinion, and in our day women are particularly powerful," he finally draws a picture of the ideal wife who shall urge her husband and train

her children to self-sacrifice. "Such women rule men and are their guiding stars. O women — mothers! The salvation of the world lies in your hands!" In that appeal to the mothers of the world there lurks a protest which in later writings developed into overwhelming condemnation. True, he chose motherhood for the type of self-sacrificing love in the treatise "On Life," which appeared soon after "What then must we do?" but maternal love, as exemplified in his own home and elsewhere, appeared to him as a noble instinct perversely directed.

The roots of maternal love are sunk deep in conservatism. The child's physical well-being is the first essential in the mother's eyes — the growth of a vigorous body by which a vigorous mind may be fitly tenanted — and this form of materialism which Tolstoy as a father accepted, Tolstoy as idealist condemned; while the penury he courted as a lightening of his soul's burden was averted by the strenuous exertions of his wife. So a rift grew without blame attaching to either, and Tolstoy henceforward wandered solitary in spirit through a wilderness of thought, seeking rest and finding none, coming perilously near to suicide before he reached haven.

To many it will seem that the finest outcome of that period of mental groping, internal strug-

gle, and contending with current ideas, lies in the above-mentioned "What then must we do?" Certain it is that no human document ever revealed the soul of its author with greater sincerity. Not for its practical suggestions, but for its impassioned humanity, its infectious altruism, "What then must we do?" takes its rank among the world's few living books. It marks that stage of Tolstoy's evolution when he made successive essays in practical philanthropy which filled him with discouragement, yet were "of use to his soul" in teaching him how far below the surface lie the seeds of human misery. The slums of Moscow, crowded with beings sunk beyond redemption; the famine-stricken plains of Samara where disease and starvation reigned, notwithstanding the stream of charity set flowing by Tolstoy's appeals and notwithstanding his untiring personal devotion, strengthened further the conviction, so constantly affirmed in his writings, of the impotence of money to alleviate distress. Whatever negations of this dictum our own systems of charitable organizations may appear to offer, there can be no question but that in Russia it held and holds true.

The social condition of Russia is like a tideless sea, whose sullen quiescence is broken from time to time by terrific storms which spend themselves

in unavailing fury. Reaction follows upon every forward motion, and the advance made by each succeeding generation is barely perceptible.

But in the period of peace following upon the close of the Crimean War the soul of the Russian people was deeply stirred by the spirit of Progress, and hope rose high on the accession of Alexander II.

The emancipation of the serfs was only one among a number of projected reforms which engaged men's minds. The national conscience awoke and echoed the cry of the exiled patriot Herzen, "Now or never!" Educational enterprise was aroused, and some forty schools for peasant children were started on the model of that opened by Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana (1861). The literary world throbbed with new life, and a brilliant company of young writers came to the surface, counting among them names of European celebrity, such as Dostoevsky, Nekrassov, and Saltykov. Unhappily the reign of Progress was short. The bureaucratic circle hemming in the Czar took alarm, and made haste to secure their ascendancy by fresh measures of oppression. Many schools were closed, including that of Tolstoy, and the nascent liberty of the Press was stifled by the most rigid censorship.

In this lamentable manner the history of Russia's internal misrule and disorder has continued to repeat itself for the last sixty years, revolving in the same vicious circle of fierce repression and persecution and utter disregard of the rights of individuals, followed by fierce reprisals on the part of the persecuted; the voice of protest no sooner raised than silenced in a prison cell or among Siberian snow-fields, yet rising again and again with inextinguishable reiteration; appeals for political freedom, for constitutional government, for better systems and wider dissemination of education, for liberty of the Press, and for an enlightened treatment of the masses, callously received and rejected. The answer with which these appeals have been met by the rulers of Russia is only too well known to the civilised world, but the obduracy of Pharaoh has called forth the plagues of Egypt. Despite the unrivalled agrarian fertility of Russia, famines recur with dire frequency, with disease and riot in their train, while the ignominious termination of the Russo-Japanese war showed that even the magnificent *morale* of the Russian soldier had been undermined and was tainted by the rottenness of the authorities set over him. What in such circumstances as these can a handful of philanthropists achieve, and what avails alms-giving or the scat-

tering of largesse to a people on the point of spiritual dissolution?

In these conditions Tolstoy's abhorrence of money, and his assertion of its futility as a panacea for human suffering, appears not merely comprehensible but inevitable, and his renunciation of personal property the strictly logical outcome of his conclusions. The partition of his estates between his wife and children, shortly before the outbreak of the great famine in 1892, served to relieve his mind partially; and the writings of Henry George, with which he became acquainted at this critical time, were an additional incentive to concentrate his thoughts on the land question. He began by reading the American propagandist's "Social Problems," which arrested his attention by its main principles and by the clearness and novelty of his arguments. Deeply impressed by the study of this book, no sooner had he finished it than he possessed himself of its forerunner, "Progress and Poverty," in which the essence of George's revolutionary doctrines is worked out.

The plan of land nationalisation there explained provided Tolstoy with well thought-out and logical reasons for a policy that was already more than sympathetic to him. Here at last was a means of ensuring economic equality for all, from the largest landowner to the humblest peasant —

a practical suggestion how to reduce the inequalities between rich and poor.

Henry George's ideas and methods are easy of comprehension. The land was made by God for every human creature that was born into the world, and therefore to confine the ownership of land to the few is wrong. If a man wants a piece of land, he ought to pay the rest of the community for the enjoyment of it. This payment or rent should be the only tax paid into the Treasury of the State. Taxation on men's own property (the produce of their own labour) should be done away with, and a rent graduated according to the site-value of the land should be substituted. Monopolies would cease without violently and unjustly disturbing society with confiscation and redistribution. No one would keep land idle if he were taxed according to its value to the community, and not according to the use to which he individually wished to put it. A man would then readily obtain possession of land, and could turn it to account and develop it without being taxed on his own industry. All human beings would thus become free in their lives and in their labour. They would no longer be forced to toil at demoralising work for low wages; they would be independent producers instead of earning a living by providing luxuries for the rich, who had enslaved

them by monopolising the land. The single tax thus created would ultimately overthrow the present "civilisation" which is chiefly built up on wage-slavery.

Tolstoy gave his whole-hearted adhesion to this doctrine, predicting a day of enlightenment when men would no longer tolerate a form of slavery which he considered as revolting as that which had so recently been abolished. Some long conversations with Henry George, while he was on a visit to Yasnaya Polyana, gave additional strength to Tolstoy's conviction that in these theories lay the elements essential to the transformation and rejuvenation of human nature, going far towards the levelling of social inequalities. But to inoculate the landed proprietors of Russia as a class with those theories was a task which even his genius could not hope to accomplish.

He recognised the necessity of proceeding from the particular to the general, and that the perfecting of human institutions was impossible without a corresponding perfection in the individual. To this end therefore the remainder of his life was dedicated. He had always held in aversion what he termed external epidemic influences: he now endeavoured to free himself not only from all current conventions, but from every association which he had formerly cherished. Self-analysis

and general observation had taught him that men are sensual beings, and that sensualism must die for want of food if it were not for sex instincts, if it were not for Art, and especially for Music. This view of life he forcibly expressed in the "Kreutzer Sonata," in which Woman and Music, the two magnets of his youth, were impeached as powers of evil. Already, in "War and Peace" and in "Anna Karenina," his descriptions of female charms resembled catalogues of weapons against which a man must arm himself or perish. The beautiful Princess Helena, with her gleaming shoulders, her faultless white bosom, and her eternal smile is evidently an object of aversion to her creator; even as the Countess Betsy, with her petty coquetries and devices for attracting attention at the Opera and elsewhere, is a target for his contempt. "Woman is a stumbling-block in a man's career," remarks a philosophical husband in "Anna Karenina." "It is difficult to love a woman and do any good work, and the only way to escape being reduced to inaction is to marry."

Even in his correspondence with the Countess A. A. Tolstoy this slighting tone prevails. "A woman has but one moral weapon instead of the whole male arsenal. That is love, and only with this weapon is feminine education successfully carried forward." Tolstoy, in fact, betrayed a touch

of orientalism in his attitude towards women. In part no doubt as a result of his motherless youth, in part to the fact that his idealism was never stimulated by any one woman as it was by individual men, his views retained this colouring on sex questions while they became widened and modified in almost every other field of human philosophy. It was only that, with a revulsion of feeling not seldom experienced by earnest thinkers, attraction was succeeded by a repulsion which reached the high note of exasperation when he wrote to a man friend, "A woman in good health—why, she is a regular beast of prey!"

None the less, he showed great kindness and sympathy to the women who sought his society, appealing to him for guidance. One of these (an American, and herself a practical philanthropist), Miss Jane Addams, expressed with feeling her sense of his personal influence. "The glimpse of Tolstoy has made a profound impression on me, not so much by what he said, as the life, the gentleness, the soul of him. I am sure you will understand my saying that I got more of Tolstoy's philosophy from our conversations than I had gotten from our books." (Quoted by Aylmer Maude in his "Life of Tolstoy.")

As frequently happens in the lives of reformers,

Tolstoy found himself more often in affinity with strangers than with his own kin. The estrangement of his ideals from those of his wife necessarily affected their conjugal relations, and the decline of mutual sympathy inevitably induced physical alienation. The stress of mental anguish arising from these conditions found vent in pages of his diaries (much of which I have been permitted to read), pages containing matter too sacred and intimate to use. The diaries shed a flood of light on Tolstoy's ideas, motives, and manner of life, and have modified some of my opinions, explaining many hitherto obscure points, while they have also enhanced my admiration for the man. They not only touch on many delicate subjects — on his relations to his wife and family — but they also give the true reasons for leaving his home at last, and explain why he did not do so before. The time, it seems to me, is not ripe for disclosures of this nature, which so closely concern the living.

Despite a strong rein of restraint his mental distress permeates the touching letter of farewell which he wrote some sixteen years before his death. He, however, shrank from acting upon it, being unable to satisfy himself that it was a right step. This letter has already appeared in foreign publications,* but it is quoted here because

* And in Birukov's short *Life of Tolstoy*, 1911.

of the light which it throws on the character and disposition of the writer, the workings of his mind being of greater moment to us than those impulsive actions by which he was too often judged.

“I have suffered long, dear Sophie, from the discord between my life and my beliefs.

“I cannot constrain you to alter your life or your accustomed ways. Neither have I had the strength to leave you ere this, for I thought my absence might deprive the little ones, still so young, of whatever influence I may have over them, and above all that I should grieve you. But I can no longer live as I have lived these last sixteen years, sometimes battling with you and irritating you, sometimes myself giving way to the influences and seductions to which I am accustomed and which surround me. I have now resolved to do what I have long desired: to go away . . . Even as the Hindoos, at the age of sixty, betake themselves to the jungle; even as every aged and religious-minded man desires to consecrate the last years of his life to God and not to idle talk, to making jokes, to gossiping, to lawn-tennis; so I, having reached the age of seventy, long with all my soul for calm and solitude, and if not perfect harmony, at least a cessation from this horrible discord between my whole life and my conscience.

“ If I had gone away openly there would have been entreaties, discussions: I should have wavered, and perhaps failed to act on my decision, whereas it must be so. I pray of you to forgive me if my action grieves you. And do you, Sophie, in particular let me go, neither seeking me out, nor bearing me ill-will, nor blaming me . . . the fact that I have left you does not mean that I have cause of complaint against you . . . I know you were not able, you were incapable of thinking and seeing as I do, and therefore you could not change your life and make sacrifices to that which you did not accept. Besides, I do not blame you; on the contrary, I remember with love and gratitude the thirty-five long years of our life in common, and especially the first half of the time when, with the courage and devotion of your maternal nature, you bravely bore what you regarded as your mission. You have given largely of maternal love and made some heavy sacrifices . . . but during the latter part of our life together, during the last fifteen years, our ways have parted. I cannot think myself the guilty one; I know that if I have changed it is not owing to you, or to the world, but because I could not do otherwise; nor can I judge you for not having followed me, and I thank you for what you have given me and will ever remember it with affection.

“Adieu, my dear Sophie, I love you.”

The personal isolation he craved was never to be his; but the isolation of spirit essential to leadership, whether of thought or action, grew year by year, so that in his own household he was veritably “in it but not of it.”

At times his loneliness weighed upon him, as when he wrote: “You would find it difficult to imagine how isolated I am, to what an extent my true self is despised by those who surround me.” But he must, none the less, have realised, as all prophets and seers have done, that solitariness of soul and freedom from the petty complexities of social life are necessary to the mystic whose constant endeavour is to simplify and to winnow the transient from the eternal.

Notwithstanding the isolation of his inner life he remained — or it might more accurately be said he became — the most accessible of men.

Appeals for guidance came to him from all parts of the world — America, France, China, Japan — while *Yasnaya Polyana* was the frequent resort of those needing advice, sympathy, or practical assistance. None appealed to him in vain; at the same time, he was exceedingly chary of explicit rules of conduct. It might be said of Tolstoy that he became a spiritual leader in spite of

himself, so averse was he from assuming authority. His aim was ever to teach his followers themselves to hear the inward monitory voice, and to obey it of their own accord. "To know the meaning of Life, you must first know the meaning of Love," he would say; "and then see that you do what love bids you." His distrust of "epidemic ideas" extended to religious communities and congregations.

"We must not go to meet each other, but go each of us to God. You say it is easier to go all together? Why yes, to dig or to mow. But one can only draw near to God in isolation . . . I picture the world to myself as a vast temple, in which the light falls from above in the very centre. To meet together all must go towards the light. There we shall find ourselves, gathered from many quarters, united with men we did not expect to see; therein is joy."

The humility which had so completely supplanted his youthful arrogance, and which made him shrink from impelling others to follow in his steps, endued him also with the teachableness of a child towards those whom he accepted as his spiritual mentors. It was a peasant nonconformist writer, Soutaev, who by conversing with

him on the revelations of the Gospels helped him to regain his childhood's faith, and incidentally brought him into closer relations with religious, but otherwise untaught, men of the people. He saw how instead of railing against fate after the manner of their social superiors, they endured sickness and misfortune with a calm confidence that all was by the will of God, as it must be and should be. From his peasant teachers he drew the watchwords Faith, Love, and Labour, and by their light he established that concord in his own life without which the concord of the universe remains impossible to realise. The process of inward struggle — told with unsparing truth in "Confession" — is finely painted in "Father Serge," whose life story points to the conclusion at which Tolstoy ultimately arrived, namely, that not in withdrawal from the common trials and temptations of men, but in sharing them, lies our best fulfilment of our duty towards mankind and towards God. Tolstoy gave practical effect to this principle, and to this long-felt desire to be of use to the poor of the country, by editing and publishing, aided by his friend Chertkov,* popular

* In Russia and out of it Mr. Chertkov has been the subject of violent attack. Many of the misunderstandings of Tolstoy's later years have also been attributed by critics, and by those who hate or belittle his ideas, to the influence of this friend. These attacks are very regrettable and require a word of protest. From

tales, suited to the means and intelligence of the humblest peasant. The undertaking was initiated in 1885, and continued for many years to occupy much of Tolstoy's time and energies. He threw himself with ardour into his editorial duties; reading and correcting manuscripts, returning them sometimes to the authors with advice as to their reconstruction, and making translations from foreign works — all this in addition to his own original contributions, in which he carried out the principle which he constantly laid down for his collaborators, that literary graces must be set aside, and that the mental calibre of those for whom the books were primarily intended must be constantly borne in mind. He attained a splendid fulfilment of his own theories, employing the moujik's expressive vernacular in portraying his homely wisdom, religious faith, and goodness of nature. Sometimes the prevailing simplicity of style and motive is tinged with a vague colouring of oriental legend, but the personal accent is marked throughout. No similar achievement in

the beginning Mr. Chertkov has striven to spread the ideas of Tolstoy, and has won neither glory nor money from his faithful and single-hearted devotion. He has carried on his work with a rare love and sympathy in spite of difficulties. No one appreciated or valued his friendship and self-sacrifice more than Tolstoy himself, who was firmly attached to him from the date of his first meeting, consulting him and confiding in him at every moment, even during Mr. Chertkov's long exile.

modern literature has awakened so universal a sense of sympathy and admiration, perhaps because none has been so entirely a labour of love.

The series of educational primers which Tolstoy prepared and published concurrently with the "Popular Tales" have had an equally large, though exclusively Russian, circulation, being admirably suited to their purpose — that of teaching young children the rudiments of history, geography, and science. Little leisure remained for the service of Art.

The history of Tolstoy as a man of letters forms a separate page of his biography, and one into which it is not possible to enter in the brief compass of this introduction. It requires, however, a passing allusion. Tolstoy even in his early days never seems to have approached near to that manner of life which the literary man leads: neither to have shut himself up in his study, nor to have barred the entrance to disturbing friends. On the one hand, he was fond of society, and during his brief residence in St. Petersburg was never so engrossed in authorship as to forego the pleasure of a ball or evening entertainment. Little wonder, when one looks back at the brilliant young officer surrounded and petted by the great hostesses of Russia. On the other hand, he was no devotee at the literary altar. No patron of lit-

erature could claim him as his constant visitor; no inner circle of men of letters monopolised his idle hours. Afterwards, when he left the capital and settled in the country, he was almost entirely cut off from the association of literary men, and never seems to have sought their companionship. Nevertheless, he had all through his life many fast friends, among them such as the poet Fet, the novelist Chekhov, and the great Russian librarian Stasov, who often came to him. These visits always gave him pleasure. The discussions, whether on the literary movements of the day or on the merits of Gæthe or the humour of Gogol, were welcome interruptions to his ever-absorbing metaphysical studies. In later life, also, though never in touch with the rising generation of authors, we find him corresponding with them, criticising their style and subject matter. When Andreev, the most modern of all modern Russian writers, came to pay his respects to Tolstoy some months before his death, he was received with cordiality, although Tolstoy, as he expressed himself afterwards, felt that there was a great gulf fixed between them.

Literature, as literature, had lost its charm for him. "You are perfectly right," he writes to a friend; "I care only for the idea, and I pay no attention to my style." The idea was the impor-

tant thing to Tolstoy in everything that he read or wrote. When his attention was drawn to an illuminating essay on the poet Lermontov he was pleased with it, not because it demonstrated Lermontov's position in the literary history of Russia, but because it pointed out the moral aims which underlay the wild Byronism of his works. He reproached the novelist Leskov, who had sent him his latest novel, for the "*exubérance*" of his flowers of speech and for his florid sentences — beautiful in their way, he says, but inexpedient and unnecessary. He even counselled the younger generation to give up poetry as a form of expression and to use prose instead. Poetry, he maintained, was always artificial and obscure. His attitude towards the art of writing remained to the end one of hostility. Whenever he caught himself working for art he was wont to reproach himself, and his diaries contain many recriminations against his own weakness in yielding to this besetting temptation. Yet to these very lapses we are indebted for this collection of fragments.

The greater number of stories and plays contained in these volumes date from the years following upon Tolstoy's pedagogic activity. Long intervals, however, elapsed in most cases between the original synopsis and the final touches. Thus "Father Serge," of which he sketched the outline

to Mr. Chertkov in 1890, was so often put aside to make way for purely ethical writings that not till 1898 does the entry occur in his diary, "To-day, quite unexpectedly, I finished *Serge*." A year previously a dramatic incident had come to his knowledge, which he elaborated in the play entitled "*The Man who was dead*." It ran on the lines familiarised by *Enoch Arden* and similar stories, of a wife deserted by her husband and supported in his absence by a benefactor, whom she subsequently marries. In this instance the supposed dead man was suddenly resuscitated as the result of his own admissions in his cups, the wife and her second husband being consequently arrested and condemned to a term of imprisonment. Tolstoy seriously attacked the subject during the summer of 1900, and having brought it within a measurable distance of completion in a shorter time than was usual with him, submitted it to the judgment of a circle of friends. The drama made a deep impression on the privileged few who read it, and some mention of it appeared in the newspapers.

Shortly afterwards a young man came to see Tolstoy in private. He begged him to refrain from publishing "*The Man who was dead*," as it was the history of his mother's life, and would distress her gravely, besides possibly occasioning

further police intervention. Tolstoy promptly consented, and the play remained, as it now appears, in an unfinished condition. He had already felt doubtful whether "it was a thing God would approve," Art for Art's sake having in his eyes no right to existence. For this reason a didactic tendency is increasingly evident in these later stories. "After the Ball" gives a painful picture of Russian military cruelty; "The Forged Coupon" traces the cancerous growth of evil, and demonstrates with dramatic force the cumulative misery resulting from one apparently trivial act of wrongdoing.

Of the three plays included in these volumes, "The Light that shines in Darkness" has a special claim to our attention as an example of autobiography in the guise of drama. It is a specimen of Tolstoy's gift of seeing himself as others saw him, and viewing a question in all its bearings. It presents not actions but ideas, giving with entire impartiality the opinions of his home circle, of his friends, of the Church and of the State, in regard to his altruistic propaganda and to the anarchism of which he has been accused. The scene of the renunciation of the estates of the hero may be taken as a literal version of what actually took place in regard to Tolstoy himself, while the dialogues by which the piece is carried

forward are more like verbatim records than imaginary conversations.

This play was, in addition, a medium by which Tolstoy emphasised his abhorrence of military service, and probably for this reason its production is absolutely forbidden in Russia. A word may be said here on Tolstoy's so-called Anarchy, a term admitting of grave misconstruction. In that he denied the benefit of existing governments to the people over whom they ruled, and in that he stigmatised standing armies as "collections of disciplined murderers," Tolstoy was an Anarchist; but in that he reprobated the methods of violence, no matter how righteous the cause at stake, and upheld by word and deed the gospel of Love and submission, he cannot be judged guilty of Anarchism in its full significance. He could not, however, suppress the sympathy which he felt with those whose resistance to oppression brought them into deadly conflict with autocracy. He found in the Caucasian chieftain, Hadji Murat, a subject full of human interest and dramatic possibilities; and though some eight years passed before he corrected the manuscript for the last time (in 1903), it is evident from the numbers of entries in his diary that it had greatly occupied his thoughts so far back even as the period which he spent in Tiflis prior to the Crimean war. It was

then that the final subjugation of the Caucasus took place, and Shamil and his devoted band made their last struggle for freedom. After the lapse of half a century, Tolstoy gave vent in "Hadji Murat" to the resentment which the military despotism of Nicholas I. had roused in his sensitive and fearless spirit.

Courage was the dominant note in Tolstoy's character, and none have excelled him in portraying brave men. His own fearlessness was of the rarest, in that it was both physical and moral. The mettle tried and proved at Sebastopol sustained him when he had drawn on himself the bitter animosity of "Holy Synod" and the relentless anger of Czardom. In spite of his non-resistance doctrine, Tolstoy's courage was not of the passive order. It was his natural bent to rouse his foes to combat, rather than wait for their attack, to put on the defensive every falsehood and every wrong of which he was cognisant. Truth in himself and in others was what he most desired, and that to which he strove at all costs to attain. He was his own severest critic, weighing his own actions, analysing his own thoughts, and baring himself to the eyes of the world with unflinching candour. Greatest of autobiographers, he extenuates nothing: you see the whole man with his worst faults and best qualities; weak-

nesses accentuated by the energy with which they are characterized, apparent waste of mental forces bent on solving the insoluble, inherited tastes and prejudices, altruistic impulses and virile passions, egoism and idealism, all strangely mingled and continually warring against each other, until from the death-throes of spiritual conflict issued a new birth and a new life. In the ancient Scripture "God is love" Tolstoy discerned fresh meaning, and strove with superhuman energy to bring home that meaning to the world at large. His doctrine in fact appears less as a new light in the darkness than as a revival of the pure flame of "the Mystic of the Galilean hills," whose teaching he accepted while denying His divinity.

Of Tolstoy's beliefs in regard to the Christian religion it may be said that with advancing years he became more and more disposed to regard religious truth as one continuous stream of spiritual thought flowing through the ages of man's history, emanating principally from the inspired prophets and seers of Israel, India, and China. Finally, in 1909, in a letter to a friend he summed up his conviction in the following words:—

"For me the doctrine of Jesus is simply one of those beautiful religious doctrines which we have received from Egyptian, Jewish, Hindoo, Chi-

nese, and Greek antiquity. The two great principles of Jesus: love of God — in a word absolute perfection — and love of one's neighbour, that is to say, love of all men without distinction, have been preached by all the sages of the world — Krishna, Buddha, Lao-tse, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and among the moderns, Rousseau, Pascal, Kant, Emerson, Channing, and many others. Religious and moral truth is everywhere and always the same. I have no predilection whatever for Christianity. If I have been particularly interested in the doctrine of Jesus it is, firstly, because I was born in that religion and have lived among Christians; secondly, because I have found a great spiritual joy in freeing the doctrine in its purity from the astounding falsifications wrought by the Churches."

Tolstoy's life-work was indeed a splendid striving to free truth from falsehood, to simplify the complexities of civilisation and demonstrate their futility. Realists as gifted have come and gone and left but little trace. It is conceivable that the great trilogy of "Anna Karenina," "War and Peace," and "Resurrection" may one day be forgotten, but Tolstoy's teaching stands on firmer foundations, and has stirred the hearts of thou-

sands who are indifferent to the finest display of psychic analysis. He has taught men to venture beyond the limits set by reason, to rise above the actual, and to find the meaning of life in love. It was his mission to probe our moral ulcers to the roots and to raise moribund ideals from the dust, breathing his own vitality into them, till they rose before our eyes as living aspirations. The spiritual joy of which he wrote was no rhetorical hyperbole; it was manifest in the man himself, and was the fount of the lofty idealism which made him not only "the Conscience of Russia" but of the civilised world.

Idealism is one of those large abstractions which are invested by various minds with varying shades of meaning, and which find expression in an infinite number of forms. Ideals bred and fostered in the heart of man receive at birth an impress from the life that engenders them, and when that life is tempest-tossed the thought that springs from it must bear a birth-mark of the storm. That birth-mark is stamped on all Tolstoy's utterances, the simplest and the most metaphysical. But though he did not pass scathless through the purging fires, nor escape with eyes undimmed from the mystic light which flooded his soul, his ideal is not thereby invalidated. It was, he admitted,

unattainable, but none the less a state of perfection to which we must continually aspire, undaunted by partial failure.

“There is nothing wrong in not living up to the ideal which you have made for yourself, but what is wrong is, if on looking back, you cannot see that you have made the least step nearer to your ideal.”

How far Tolstoy's doctrines may influence succeeding generations it is impossible to foretell; but when time has extinguished what is merely personal or racial, the divine spark which he received from his great spiritual forerunners in other times and countries will undoubtedly be found alight. His universality enabled him to unite himself closely with them in mental sympathy; sometimes so closely, as in the case of J. J. Rousseau, as to raise analogies and comparisons designed to show that he merely followed in a well-worn pathway. Yet the similarity of Tolstoy's ideas to those of the author of the “Contrat Social” hardly goes beyond a mutual distrust of Art and Science as aids to human happiness and virtue, and a desire to establish among mankind a true sense of brotherhood. For the rest, the

appeals which they individually made to Humanity were as dissimilar as the currents of their lives, and equally dissimilar in effect.

The magic flute of Rousseau's eloquence breathed fanaticism into his disciples, and a desire to mass themselves against the foes of liberty. Tolstoy's trumpet-call sounds a deeper note. It pierces the heart, summoning each man to the inquisition of his own conscience, and to justify his existence by labour, that he may thereafter sleep the sleep of peace.

The exaltation which he awakens owes nothing to rhythmical language nor to subtle interpretations of sensuous emotion; it proceeds from a perception of eternal truth, the truth that has love, faith, courage, and self-sacrifice for the corner-stones of its enduring edifice.

C. HAGBERG WRIGHT.

NOTE.—Owing to circumstances entirely outside the control of the editor some of these translations have been done in haste and there has not been sufficient time for revision.

The translators were chosen by an agent of the executor and not by the editor.

LIST OF POSTHUMOUS WORKS, GIVING DATE
WHEN EACH WAS FINISHED OR LENGTH OF
TIME OCCUPIED IN WRITING.

- Father Serge.* 1890-98.
Introduction to the History of a Mother. 1894.
Memoirs of a Mother. 1894.
The Young Czar. 1894.
Diary of a Lunatic. 1896.
Hadji Murat. 1896-1904.
The Light that shines in Darkness. 1898-1901.
The Man who was dead. 1900.
After the Ball. 1903.
The Forged Coupon. 1904.
Alexis. 1905.
Diary of Alexander I. 1905.
The Dream. 1906.
Father Vassily. 1906.
There are no Guilty People. 1909.
The Wisdom of Children. 1909.
The Cause of it All. 1910.
Chodynko. 1910.
Two Travellers. Date uncertain.

THE FORGED COUPON

THE FORGED COUPON

PART FIRST

I

FEDOR MIHAILOVICH SMOKOVNIKOV, the president of the local Income Tax Department, a man of unswerving honesty — and proud of it, too — a gloomy Liberal, a free-thinker, and an enemy to every manifestation of religious feeling, which he thought a relic of superstition, came home from his office feeling very much annoyed. The Governor of the province had sent him an extraordinarily stupid minute, almost assuming that his dealings had been dishonest.

Fedor Mihailovich felt embittered, and wrote at once a sharp answer. On his return home everything seemed to go contrary to his wishes.

It was five minutes to five, and he expected the dinner to be served at once, but he was told it was not ready. He banged the door and went to his study. Somebody knocked at the door. "Who the devil is that?" he thought; and shouted, —

"Who is there?"

The door opened and a boy of fifteen came in, the son of Fedor Mihailovich, a pupil of the fifth class of the local school.

"What do you want?"

"It is the first of the month to-day, father."

"Well! You want your money?"

It had been arranged that the father should pay his son a monthly allowance of three roubles as pocket money. Fedor Mihailovich frowned, took out of his pocket-book a coupon of two roubles fifty kopeks which he found among the bank-notes, and added to it fifty kopeks in silver out of the loose change in his purse. The boy kept silent, and did not take the money his father proffered him.

"Father, please give me some more in advance."

"What?"

"I would not ask for it, but I have borrowed a small sum from a friend, and promised upon my word of honour to pay it off. My honour is dear to me, and that is why I want another three roubles. I don't like asking you; but, please, father, give me another three roubles."

"I have told you —"

"I know, father, but just for once."

"You have an allowance of three roubles and

you ought to be content. I had not fifty kopeks when I was your age."

"Now, all my comrades have much more. Petrov and Ivanitsky have fifty roubles a month."

"And I tell you that if you behave like them you will be a scoundrel. Mind that."

"What is there to mind? You never understand my position. I shall be disgraced if I don't pay my debt. It is all very well for you to speak as you do."

"Be off, you silly boy! Be off!"

Fedor Mihailovich jumped from his seat and pounced upon his son. "Be off, I say!" he shouted. "You deserve a good thrashing, all you boys!"

His son was at once frightened and embittered. The bitterness was even greater than the fright. With his head bent down he hastily turned to the door. Fedor Mihailovich did not intend to strike him, but he was glad to vent his wrath, and went on shouting and abusing the boy till he had closed the door.

When the maid came in to announce that dinner was ready, Fedor Mihailovich rose.

"At last!" he said. "I don't feel hungry any longer."

He went to the dining-room with a sullen face. At table his wife made some remark, but he gave

her such a short and angry answer that she abstained from further speech. The son also did not lift his eyes from his plate, and was silent all the time. The trio finished their dinner in silence, rose from the table and separated, without a word.

After dinner the boy went to his room, took the coupon and the change out of his pocket, and threw the money on the table. After that he took off his uniform and put on a jacket.

He sat down to work, and began to study Latin grammar out of a dog's-eared book. After a while he rose, closed and bolted the door, shifted the money into a drawer, took out some cigarette papers, rolled one up, stuffed it with cotton wool, and began to smoke.

He spent nearly two hours over his grammar and writing books without understanding a word of what he saw before him; then he rose and began to stamp up and down the room, trying to recollect all that his father had said to him. All the abuse showered upon him, and worst of all his father's angry face, were as fresh in his memory as if he saw and heard them all over again. "Silly boy! You ought to get a good thrashing!" And the more he thought of it the angrier he grew. He remembered also how his father said: "I see what a scoundrel you will turn out.

I know you will. You are sure to become a cheat, if you go on like that. . . .” He had certainly forgotten how he felt when he was young! “What crime have I committed, I wonder? I wanted to go to the theatre, and having no money borrowed some from Petia Grouchetsky. Was that so very wicked of me? Another father would have been sorry for me; would have asked how it all happened; whereas he just called me names. He never thinks of anything but himself. When it is he who has not got something he wants — that is a different matter! Then all the house is upset by his shouts. And I — I am a scoundrel, a cheat, he says. No, I don’t love him, although he is my father. It may be wrong, but I hate him.”

There was a knock at the door. The servant brought a letter — a message from his friend. “They want an answer,” said the servant.

The letter ran as follows: “I ask you now for the third time to pay me back the six roubles you have borrowed; you are trying to avoid me. That is not the way an honest man ought to behave. Will you please send the amount by my messenger? I am myself in a frightful fix. Can you not get the money somewhere? — Yours, according to whether you send the money or not, with scorn, or love,

Grouchetsky.”

"There we have it! Such a pig! Could he not wait a while? I will have another try."

Mitia went to his mother. This was his last hope. His mother was very kind, and hardly ever refused him anything. She would probably have helped him this time also out of his trouble, but she was in great anxiety: her younger child, Petia, a boy of two, had fallen ill. She got angry with Mitia for rushing so noisily into the nursery, and refused him almost without listening to what he had to say. Mitia muttered something to himself and turned to go. The mother felt sorry for him. "Wait, Mitia," she said; "I have not got the money you want now, but I will get it for you to-morrow."

But Mitia was still raging against his father.

"What is the use of having it to-morrow, when I want it to-day? I am going to see a friend. That is all I have got to say."

He went out, banging the door. . . .
"Nothing else is left to me. He will tell me how to pawn my watch," he thought, touching his watch in his pocket.

Mitia went to his room, took the coupon and the watch from the drawer, put on his coat, and went to Mahin.

II

MAHIN was his schoolfellow, his senior, a grown-up young man with a moustache. He gambled, had a large feminine acquaintance, and always had ready cash. He lived with his aunt. Mitia quite realised that Mahin was not a respectable fellow, but when he was in his company he could not help doing what he wished. Mahin was in when Mitia called, and was just preparing to go to the theatre. His untidy room smelt of scented soap and eau-de-Cologne.

"That's awful, old chap," said Mahin, when Mitia telling him about his troubles, showed the coupon and the fifty kopeks, and added that he wanted nine roubles more. "We might, of course, go and pawn your watch. But we might do something far better." And Mahin winked an eye.

"What's that?"

"Something quite simple." Mahin took the coupon in his hand. "Put *one* before the 2.50 and it will be 12.50."

"But do such coupons exist?"

"Why, certainly; the thousand roubles notes have coupons of 12.50. I have cashed one in the same way."

"You don't say so?"

"Well, yes or no?" asked Mahin, taking the pen and smoothing the coupon with the fingers of his left hand.

"But it is wrong."

"Nonsense!"

"Nonsense, indeed," thought Mitia, and again his father's hard words came back to his memory.

"Scoundrel! As you called me that, I might as well be it." He looked into Mahin's face. Mahin looked at him, smiling with perfect ease.

"Well?" he said.

"All right. I don't mind."

Mahin carefully wrote the unit in front of 2.50.

"Now let us go to the shop across the road; they sell photographers' materials there. I just happen to want a frame — for this young person here." He took out of his pocket a photograph of a young lady with large eyes, luxuriant hair, and an uncommonly well-developed bust.

"Is she not sweet? Eh?"

"Yes, yes . . . of course . . ."

"Well, you see.— But let us go."

Mahin took his coat, and they left the house.

III

THE two boys, having rung the door-bell, entered the empty shop, which had shelves along the walls and photographic appliances on them, together with show-cases on the counters. A plain woman, with a kind face, came through the inner door and asked from behind the counter what they required.

"A nice frame, if you please, madam."

"At what price?" asked the woman; she wore mittens on her swollen fingers with which she rapidly handled picture-frames of different shapes.

"These are fifty kopeks each; and these are a little more expensive. There is rather a pretty one, of quite a new style; one rouble and twenty kopeks."

"All right, I will have this. But could not you make it cheaper? Let us say one rouble."

"We don't bargain in our shop," said the shopkeeper with a dignified air.

"Well, I will take it," said Mahin, and put the coupon on the counter. "Wrap up the frame and give me change. But please be quick. We must be off to the theatre, and it is getting late."

"You have plenty of time," said the shopkeeper, examining the coupon very closely because of her shortsightedness.

"It will look lovely in that frame, don't you think so?" said Mahin, turning to Mitia.

"Have you no small change?" asked the shop-woman.

"I am sorry, I have not. My father gave me that, so I have to cash it."

"But surely you have one rouble twenty?"

"I have only fifty kopeks in cash. But what are you afraid of? You don't think, I suppose, that we want to cheat you and give you bad money?"

"Oh, no; I don't mean anything of the sort."

"You had better give it to me back. We will cash it somewhere else."

"How much have I to pay you back? Eleven and something."

She made a calculation on the counter, opened the desk, took out a ten-roubles note, looked for change and added to the sum six twenty-kopeks coins and two five-kopek pieces.

"Please make a parcel of the frame," said Mahin, taking the money in a leisurely fashion.

"Yes, sir." She made a parcel and tied it with a string.

Mitia only breathed freely when the door bell rang behind them, and they were again in the street.

"There are ten roubles for you, and let me have the rest. I will give it back to you."

Mahin went off to the theatre, and Mitia called on Grouchetsky to repay the money he had borrowed from him.

IV

AN hour after the boys were gone Eugene Mihailovich, the owner of the shop, came home, and began to count his receipts.

"Oh, you clumsy fool! Idiot that you are!" he shouted, addressing his wife, after having seen the coupon and noticed the forgery.

"But I have often seen you, Eugene, accepting coupons in payment, and precisely twelve rouble ones," retorted his wife, very humiliated, grieved, and all but bursting into tears. "I really don't know how they contrived to cheat me," she went on. "They were pupils of the school, in uniform. One of them was quite a handsome boy, and looked so *comme il faut*."

"A *comme il faut* fool, that is what you are!" The husband went on scolding her, while he counted the cash. . . . "When I accept coupons, I see what is written on them. And you probably looked only at the boys' pretty faces.

You had better behave yourself in your old age."

His wife could not stand this, and got into a fury.

"That is just like you men! Blaming everybody around you. But when it is you who lose fifty-four roubles at cards — that is of no consequence in your eyes."

"That is a different matter —"

"I don't want to talk to you," said his wife, and went to her room. There she began to remind herself that her family was opposed to her marriage, thinking her present husband far below her in social rank, and that it was she who insisted on marrying him. Then she went on thinking of the child she had lost, and how indifferent her husband had been to their loss. She hated him so intensely at that moment that she wished for his death. Her wish frightened her, however, and she hurriedly began to dress and left the house. When her husband came from the shop to the inner rooms of their flat she was gone. Without waiting for him she had dressed and gone off to friends — a teacher of French in the school, a Russified Pole, and his wife — who had invited her and her husband to a party in their house that evening.

V

THE guests at the party had tea and cakes offered to them, and sat down after that to play whist at a number of card-tables.

The partners of Eugene Mihailovich's wife were the host himself, an officer, and an old and very stupid lady in a wig, a widow who owned a music-shop; she loved playing cards and played remarkably well. But it was Eugene Mihailovich's wife who was the winner all the time. The best cards were continually in her hands. At her side she had a plate with grapes and a pear and was in the best of spirits.

"And Eugene Mihailovich? Why is he so late?" asked the hostess, who played at another table.

"Probably busy settling accounts," said Eugene Mihailovich's wife. "He has to pay off the tradesmen, to get in firewood." The quarrel she had with her husband revived in her memory; she frowned, and her hands, from which she had not taken off the mittens, shook with fury against him.

"Oh, there he is. — We have just been speaking of you," said the hostess to Eugene Mihailo-

vich, who came in at that very moment. "Why are you so late?"

"I was busy," answered Eugene Mihailovich, in a gay voice, rubbing his hands. And to his wife's surprise he came to her side and said, —

"You know, I managed to get rid of the coupon."

"No! You don't say so!"

"Yes, I used it to pay for a cart-load of firewood I bought from a peasant."

And Eugene Mihailovich related with great indignation to the company present — his wife adding more details to his narrative — how his wife had been cheated by two unscrupulous schoolboys.

"Well, and now let us sit down to work," he said, taking his place at one of the whist-tables when his turn came, and beginning to shuffle the cards.

VI

EUGENE MIHAILOVICH had actually used the coupon to buy firewood from the peasant Ivan Mironov, who had thought of setting up in business on the seventeen roubles he possessed. He hoped in this way to earn another eight roubles, and with the twenty-five roubles thus amassed he intended to buy a good strong horse, which he would want in the spring for work in the fields and for driv-

ing on the roads, as his old horse was almost played out.

Ivan Mironov's commercial method consisted in buying from the stores a cord of wood and dividing it into five cartloads, and then driving about the town, selling each of these at the price the stores charged for a quarter of a cord. That unfortunate day Ivan Mironov drove out very early with half a cartload, which he soon sold. He loaded up again with another cartload which he hoped to sell, but he looked in vain for a customer; no one would buy it. It was his bad luck all that day to come across experienced townspeople, who knew all the tricks of the peasants in selling firewood, and would not believe that he had actually brought the wood from the country as he assured them. He got hungry, and felt cold in his ragged woollen coat. It was nearly below zero when evening came on; his horse which he had treated without mercy, hoping soon to sell it to the knacker's yard, refused to move a step. So Ivan Mironov was quite ready to sell his firewood at a loss when he met Eugene Mihailovich, who was on his way home from the tobacconist.

"Buy my cartload of firewood, sir. I will give it to you cheap. My poor horse is tired, and can't go any farther."

"Where do you come from?"

"From the country, sir. This firewood is from our place. Good dry wood, I can assure you."

"Good wood indeed! I know your tricks. Well, what is your price?"

Ivan Mironov began by asking a high price, but reduced it once, and finished by selling the cartload for just what it had cost him.

"I'm giving it to you cheap, just to please you, sir. — Besides, I am glad it is not a long way to your house," he added.

Eugene Mihailovich did not bargain very much. He did not mind paying a little more, because he was delighted to think he could make use of the coupon and get rid of it. With great difficulty Ivan Mironov managed at last, by pulling the shafts himself, to drag his cart into the courtyard, where he was obliged to unload the firewood unaided and pile it up in the shed. The yard-porter was out. Ivan Mironov hesitated at first to accept the coupon, but Eugene Mihailovich insisted, and as he looked a very important person the peasant at last agreed.

He went by the backstairs to the servants' room, crossed himself before the ikon, wiped his beard which was covered with icicles, turned up the skirts of his coat, took out of his pocket a

leather purse, and out of the purse eight roubles and fifty kopeks, and handed the change to Eugene Mihailovich. Carefully folding the coupon, he put it in the purse. Then, according to custom, he thanked the gentleman for his kindness, and, using the whip-handle instead of the lash, he belaboured the half-frozen horse that he had doomed to an early death, and betook himself to a public-house.

Arriving there, Ivan Mironov called for vodka and tea for which he paid eight kopeks. Comfortable and warm after the tea, he chatted in the very best of spirits with a yard-porter who was sitting at his table. Soon he grew communicative and told his companion all about the conditions of his life. He told him he came from the village Vassilievsky, twelve miles from town, and also that he had his allotment of land given to him by his family, as he wanted to live apart from his father and his brothers; that he had a wife and two children; the elder boy went to school, and did not yet help him in his work. He also said he lived in lodgings and intended going to the horse-fair the next day to look for a good horse, and, may be, to buy one. He went on to state that he had now nearly twenty-five roubles — only one rouble short — and that half of it was a coupon. He took the coupon out of his purse to show to his

new friend. The yard-porter was an illiterate man, but he said he had had such coupons given him by lodgers to change; that they were good; but that one might also chance on forged ones; so he advised the peasant, for the sake of security, to change it at once at the counter. Ivan Mironov gave the coupon to the waiter and asked for change. The waiter, however, did not bring the change, but came back with the manager, a bald-headed man with a shining face, who was holding the coupon in his fat hand.

"Your money is no good," he said, showing the coupon, but apparently determined not to give it back.

"The coupon must be all right. I got it from a gentleman."

"It is bad, I tell you. The coupon is forged."

"Forged? Give it back to me."

"I will not. You fellows have got to be punished for such tricks. Of course, you did it yourself — you and some of your rascally friends."

"Give me the money. What right have you —"

"Sidor! Call a policeman," said the barman to the waiter. Ivan Mironov was rather drunk, and in that condition was hard to manage. He seized the manager by the collar and began to shout.

"Give me back my money, I say. I will go to the gentleman who gave it to me. I know where he lives."

The manager had to struggle with all his force to get loose from Ivan Mironov, and his shirt was torn, —

"Oh, that's the way you behave! Get hold of him."

The waiter took hold of Ivan Mironov; at that moment the policeman arrived. Looking very important, he inquired what had happened, and unhesitatingly gave his orders:

"Take him to the police-station."

As to the coupon, the policeman put it in his pocket; Ivan Mironov, together with his horse, was brought to the nearest station.

VII

IVAN MIRONOV had to spend the night in the police-station, in the company of drunkards and thieves. It was noon of the next day when he was summoned to the police officer; put through a close examination, and sent in the care of a policeman to Eugene Mihailovich's shop. Ivan Mironov remembered the street and the house.

The policeman asked for the shopkeeper,

showed him the coupon and confronted him with Ivan Mironov, who declared that he had received the coupon in that very place. Eugene Mihailovich at once assumed a very severe and astonished air.

"You are mad, my good fellow," he said. "I have never seen this man before in my life," he added, addressing the policeman.

"It is a sin, sir," said Ivan Mironov. "Think of the hour when you will die."

"Why, you must be dreaming! You have sold your firewood to some one else," said Eugene Mihailovich. "But wait a minute. I will go and ask my wife whether she bought any firewood yesterday." Eugene Mihailovich left them and immediately called the yard-porter Vassily, a strong, handsome, quick, cheerful, well-dressed man.

He told Vassily that if any one should inquire where the last supply of firewood was bought, he was to say they'd got it from the stores, and not from a peasant in the street.

"A peasant has come," he said to Vassily, "who has declared to the police that I gave him a forged coupon. He is a fool and talks nonsense, but you are a clever man. Mind you say that we always get the firewood from the stores. And, by the way, I've been thinking some time of

giving you money to buy a new jacket," added Eugene Mihailovich, and gave the man five roubles. Vassily looking with pleasure first at the five rouble note, then at Eugene Mihailovich's face, shook his head and smiled.

"I know, those peasant folks have no brains. Ignorance, of course. Don't you be uneasy. I know what I have to say."

Ivan Mironov, with tears in his eyes, implored Eugene Mihailovich over and over again to acknowledge the coupon he had given him, and the yard-porter to believe what he said, but it proved quite useless; they both insisted that they had never bought firewood from a peasant in the street. The policeman brought Ivan Mironov back to the police-station, and he was charged with forging the coupon. Only after taking the advice of a drunken office clerk in the same cell with him, and bribing the police officer with five roubles, did Ivan Mironov get out of jail, without the coupon, and with only seven roubles left out of the twenty-five he had the day before.

Of these seven roubles he spent three in the public-house and came home to his wife dead drunk, with a bruised and swollen face.

His wife was expecting a child, and felt very ill. She began to scold her husband; he pushed her away, and she struck him. Without answer-

ing a word he lay down on the plank and began to weep bitterly.

Not till the next day did he tell his wife what had actually happened. She believed him at once, and thoroughly cursed the dastardly rich man who had cheated Ivan. He was sobered now, and remembering the advice a workman had given him, with whom he had many a drink the day before, decided to go to a lawyer and tell him of the wrong the owner of the photograph shop had done him.

VIII

THE lawyer consented to take proceedings on behalf of Ivan Mironov, not so much for the sake of the fee, as because he believed the peasant, and was revolted by the wrong done to him.

Both parties appeared in the court when the case was tried, and the yard-porter Vassily was summoned as witness. They repeated in the court all they had said before to the police officials. Ivan Mironov again called to his aid the name of the Divinity, and reminded the shopkeeper of the hour of death. Eugene Mihailovich, although quite aware of his wickedness, and the risks he was running, despite the rebukes of his conscience, could not now change his testimony, and went on

calmly to deny all the allegations made against him.

The yard-porter Vassily had received another ten roubles from his master, and, quite unperturbed, asserted with a smile that he did not know anything about Ivan Mironov. And when he was called upon to take the oath, he overcame his inner qualms, and repeated with assumed ease the terms of the oath, read to him by the old priest appointed to the court. By the holy Cross and the Gospel, he swore that he spoke the whole truth.

The case was decided against Ivan Mironov, who was sentenced to pay five roubles for expenses. This sum Eugene Mihailovich generously paid for him. Before dismissing Ivan Mironov, the judge severely admonished him, saying he ought to take care in the future not to accuse respectable people, and that he also ought to be thankful that he was not forced to pay the costs, and that he had escaped a prosecution for slander, for which he would have been condemned to three months' imprisonment.

"I offer my humble thanks," said Ivan Mironov; and, shaking his head, left the court with a heavy sigh.

The whole thing seemed to have ended well for Eugene Mihailovich and the yard-porter Vassily.

But only in appearance. Something had happened which was not noticed by any one, but which was much more important than all that had been exposed to view.

Vassily had left his village and settled in town over two years ago. As time went on he sent less and less money to his father, and he did not ask his wife, who remained at home, to join him. He was in no need of her; he could in town have as many wives as he wished, and much better ones too than that clumsy, village-bred woman. Vassily, with each recurring year, became more and more familiar with the ways of the town people, forgetting the conventions of a country life. There everything was so vulgar, so grey, so poor and untidy. Here, in town, all seemed on the contrary so refined, nice, clean, and rich; so orderly too. And he became more and more convinced that people in the country live just like wild beasts, having no idea of what life is, and that only life in town is real. He read books written by clever writers, and went to the performances in the Peoples' Palace. In the country, people would not see such wonders even in dreams. In the country old men say: "Obey the law, and live with your wife; work; don't eat too much; don't care for finery," while here, in town, all the clever and learned people — those, of course,

who know what in reality the law is — only pursue their own pleasures. And they are the better for it.

Previous to the incident of the forged coupon, Vassily could not actually believe that rich people lived without any moral law. But after that, still more after having perjured himself, and not being the worse for it in spite of his fears — on the contrary, he had gained ten roubles out of it — Vassily became firmly convinced that no moral laws whatever exist, and that the only thing to do is to pursue one's own interests and pleasures. This he now made his rule in life. He accordingly got as much profit as he could out of purchasing goods for lodgers. But this did not pay all his expenses. Then he took to stealing, whenever chance offered — money and all sorts of valuables. One day he stole a purse full of money from Eugene Mihailovich, but was found out. Eugene Mihailovich did not hand him over to the police, but dismissed him on the spot.

Vassily had no wish whatever to return home to his village, and remained in Moscow with his sweetheart, looking out for a new job. He got one as yard-porter at a grocer's, but with only small wages. The next day after he had entered that service he was caught stealing bags. The grocer did not call in the police, but gave him a

good thrashing and turned him out. After that he could not find work. The money he had left was soon gone; he had to sell all his clothes and went about nearly in rags. His sweetheart left him. But notwithstanding, he kept up his high spirits, and when the spring came he started to walk home.

IX

PETER NIKOLAEVICH SVENTIZKY, a short man in black spectacles (he had weak eyes, and was threatened with complete blindness), got up, as was his custom, at dawn of day, had a cup of tea, and putting on his short fur coat trimmed with astrachan, went to look after the work on his estate.

Peter Nikolaevich had been an official in the Customs, and had gained eighteen thousand roubles during his service. About twelve years ago he quitted the service — not quite of his own accord: as a matter of fact he had been compelled to leave — and bought an estate from a young land-owner who had dissipated his fortune. Peter Nikolaevich had married at an earlier period, while still an official in the Customs. His wife, who belonged to an old noble family, was an orphan, and was left without money. She was

a tall, stoutish, good-looking woman. They had no children. Peter Nikolaevich had considerable practical talents and a strong will. He was the son of a Polish gentleman, and knew nothing about agriculture and land management; but when he acquired an estate of his own, he managed it so well that after fifteen years the waste piece of land, consisting of three hundred acres, became a model estate. All the buildings, from the dwelling-house to the corn stores and the shed for the fire engine were solidly built, had iron roofs, and were painted at the right time. In the tool house carts, ploughs, harrows, stood in perfect order, the harness was well cleaned and oiled. The horses were not very big, but all home-bred, grey, well fed, strong and devoid of blemish.

The threshing machine worked in a roofed barn, the forage was kept in a separate shed, and a paved drain was made from the stables. The cows were home-bred, not very large, but giving plenty of milk; fowls were also kept in the poultry yard, and the hens were of a special kind, laying a great quantity of eggs. In the orchard the fruit trees were well whitewashed and propped on poles to enable them to grow straight. Everything was looked after — solid, clean, and in perfect order. Peter Nikolaevich rejoiced in the perfect condition of his estate, and was proud to have achieved

it — not by oppressing the peasants, but, on the contrary, by the extreme fairness of his dealings with them.

Among the nobles of his province he belonged to the advanced party, and was more inclined to liberal than conservative views, always taking the side of the peasants against those who were still in favour of serfdom. "Treat them well, and they will be fair to you," he used to say. Of course, he did not overlook any carelessness on the part of those who worked on his estate, and he urged them on to work if they were lazy; but then he gave them good lodging, with plenty of good food, paid their wages without any delay, and gave them drinks on days of festival.

Walking cautiously on the melting snow — for the time of the year was February — Peter Nikolaevich passed the stables, and made his way to the cottage where his workmen were lodged. It was still dark, the darker because of the dense fog; but the windows of the cottage were lighted. The men had already got up. His intention was to urge them to begin work. He had arranged that they should drive out to the forest and bring back the last supply of firewood he needed before spring.

"What is that?" he thought, seeing the door of the stable wide open. "Hallo, who is there?"

No answer. Peter Nikolaevich stepped into the stable. It was dark; the ground was soft under his feet, and the air smelt of dung; on the right side of the door were two loose boxes for a pair of grey horses. Peter Nikolaevich stretched out his hand in their direction — one box was empty. He put out his foot — the horse might have been lying down. But his foot did not touch anything solid. "Where could they have taken the horse?" he thought. They certainly had not harnessed it; all the sledges stood still outside. Peter Nikolaevich went out of the stable.

"Stepan, come here!" he called.

Stepan was the head of the workmen's gang. He was just stepping out of the cottage.

"Here I am!" he said, in a cheerful voice. "Oh, is that you, Peter Nikolaevich? Our men are coming."

"Why is the stable door open?"

"Is it? I don't know anything about it. I say, Proshka, bring the lantern!"

Proshka came with the lantern. They all went to the stable, and Stepan knew at once what had happened.

"Thieves have been here, Peter Nikolaevich," he said. "The lock is broken."

"No; you don't say so!"

"Yes, the brigands! I don't see 'Mashka.' 'Hawk' is here. But 'Beauty' is not. Nor yet 'Dapple-grey.'"

Three horses had been stolen!

Peter Nikolaevich did not utter a word at first. He only frowned and took deep breaths.

"Oh," he said after a while. "If only I could lay hands on them! Who was on guard?"

"Peter. He evidently fell asleep."

Peter Nikolaevich called in the police, and making an appeal to all the authorities, sent his men to track the thieves. But the horses were not to be found.

"Wicked people," said Peter Nikolaevich. "How could they! I was always so kind to them. Now, wait! Brigands! Brigands the whole lot of them. I will no longer be kind."

X

IN the meanwhile the horses, the grey ones, had all been disposed of; Mashka was sold to the gipsies for eighteen roubles; Dapple-grey was exchanged for another horse, and passed over to another peasant who lived forty miles away from the estate; and Beauty died on the way. The man who conducted the whole affair was — Ivan Mironov. He had been employed on the estate, and

knew all the whereabouts of Peter Nikolaevich. He wanted to get back the money he had lost, and stole the horses for that reason.

After his misfortune with the forged coupon, Ivan Mironov took to drink; and all he possessed would have gone on drink if it had not been for his wife, who locked up his clothes, the horses' collars, and all the rest of what he would otherwise have squandered in public-houses. In his drunken state Ivan Mironov was continually thinking, not only of the man who had wronged him, but of all the rich people who live on robbing the poor. One day he had a drink with some peasants from the suburbs of Podolsk, and was walking home together with them. On the way the peasants, who were completely drunk, told him they had stolen a horse from a peasant's cottage. Ivan Mironov got angry, and began to abuse the horse-thieves.

"What a shame!" he said. "A horse is like a brother to the peasant. And you robbed him of it? It is a great sin, I tell you. If you go in for stealing horses, steal them from the landowners. They are worse than dogs, and deserve anything."

The talk went on, and the peasants from Podolsk told him that it required a great deal of cunning to steal a horse on an estate.

"You must know all the ins and outs of the

place, and must have somebody on the spot to help you."

Then it occurred to Ivan Mironov that he knew a landowner — Sventizky; he had worked on his estate, and Sventizky, when paying him off, had deducted one rouble and a half for a broken tool. He remembered well the grey horses which he used to drive at Sventizky's.

Ivan Mironov called on Peter Nikolaevich pretending to ask for employment, but really in order to get the information he wanted. He took precautions to make sure that the watchman was absent, and that the horses were standing in their boxes in the stable. He brought the thieves to the place, and helped them to carry off the three horses.

They divided their gains, and Ivan Mironov returned to his wife with five roubles in his pocket. He had nothing to do at home, having no horse to work in the field, and therefore continued to steal horses in company with professional horse-thieves and gipsies.

XI

PETER NIKOLAEVICH SVENTIZKY did his best to discover who had stolen his horses. He knew somebody on the estate must have helped the

thieves, and began to suspect all his staff. He inquired who had slept out that night, and the gang of the working men told him Proshka had not been in the whole night. Proshka, or Prokofy Nikolaevich, was a young fellow who had just finished his military service, handsome, and skilful in all he did; Peter Nikolaevich employed him at times as coachman. The district constable was a friend of Peter Nikolaevich, as were the provincial head of the police, the marshal of the nobility, and also the rural councillor and the examining magistrate. They all came to his house on his saint's day, drinking the cherry brandy he offered them with pleasure, and eating the nice preserved mushrooms of all kinds to accompany the liqueurs. They all sympathised with him in his trouble and tried to help him.

"You always used to take the side of the peasants," said the district constable, "and there you are! I was right in saying they are worse than wild beasts. Flogging is the only way to keep them in order. Well, you say it is all Proshka's doings. Is it not he who was your coachman sometimes?"

"Yes, that is he."

"Will you kindly call him?"

Proshka was summoned before the constable, who began to examine him.

"Where were you that night?"

Proshka pushed back his hair, and his eyes sparkled.

"At home."

"How so? All the men say you were not in."

"Just as you please, your honour."

"My pleasure has nothing to do with the matter. Tell me where you were that night."

"At home."

"Very well. Policeman, bring him to the police-station."

The reason why Proshka did not say where he had been that night was that he had spent it with his sweetheart, Parasha, and had promised not to give her away. He kept his word. No proofs were discovered against him, and he was soon discharged. But Peter Nikolaevich was convinced that Prokofy had been at the bottom of the whole affair, and began to hate him. One day Proshka bought as usual at the merchant's two measures of oats. One and a half he gave to the horses, and half a measure he gave back to the merchant; the money for it he spent in drink. Peter Nikolaevich found it out, and charged Prokofy with cheating. The judge sentenced the man to three months' imprisonment.

Prokofy had a rather proud nature, and thought himself superior to others. Prison was a great

humiliation for him. He came out of it very depressed; there was nothing more to be proud of in life. And more than that, he felt extremely bitter, not only against Peter Nikolaevich, but against the whole world.

On the whole, as all the people around him noticed, Prokofy became another man after his imprisonment, both careless and lazy; he took to drink, and he was soon caught stealing clothes at some woman's house, and found himself again in prison.

All that Peter Nikolaevich discovered about his grey horses was the hide of one of them, Beauty, which had been found somewhere on the estate. The fact that the thieves had got off scot-free irritated Peter Nikolaevich still more. He was unable now to speak of the peasants or to look at them without anger. And whenever he could he tried to oppress them.

XII

AFTER having got rid of the coupon, Eugene Mihailovich forgot all about it; but his wife, Maria Vassilievna, could not forgive herself for having been taken in, nor yet her husband for his cruel words. And most of all she was furious against the two boys who had so skilfully cheated her.

From the day she had accepted the forged coupon as payment, she looked closely at all the school-boys who came in her way in the streets. One day she met Mahin, but did not recognise him, for on seeing her he made a face which quite changed his features. But when, a fortnight after the incident with the coupon, she met Mitia Smokovnikov face to face, she knew him at once.

She let him pass her, then turned back and followed him, and arriving at his house she made inquiries as to whose son he was. The next day she went to the school and met the divinity instructor, the priest Michael Vedensky, in the hall. He asked her what she wanted. She answered that she wished to see the head of the school. "He is not quite well," said the priest. "Can I be of any use to you, or give him your message?"

Maria Vassilievna thought that she might as well tell the priest what was the matter. Michael Vedensky was a widower, and a very ambitious man. A year ago he had met Mitia Smokovnikov's father in society, and had had a discussion with him on religion. Smokovnikov had beaten him decisively on all points; indeed, he had made him appear quite ridiculous. Since that time the priest had decided to pay special attention to Smokovnikov's son; and, finding him as indifferent

to religious matters as his father was, he began to persecute him, and even brought about his failure in examinations.

When Maria Vassilievna told him what young Smokovnikov had done to her, Vedensky could not help feeling an inner satisfaction. He saw in the boy's conduct a proof of the utter wickedness of those who are not guided by the rules of the Church. He decided to take advantage of this great opportunity of warning unbelievers of the perils that threatened them. At all events, he wanted to persuade himself that this was the only motive that guided him in the course he had resolved to take. But at the bottom of his heart he was only anxious to get his revenge on the proud atheist.

"Yes, it is very sad indeed," said Father Michael, toying with the cross he was wearing over his priestly robes, and passing his hands over its polished sides. "I am very glad you have given me your confidence. As a servant of the Church I shall admonish the young man — of course with the utmost kindness. I shall certainly do it in the way that befits my holy office," said Father Michael to himself, really thinking that he had forgotten the ill-feeling the boy's father had towards him. He firmly believed the boy's soul to be the only object of his pious care.

The next day, during the divinity lesson which Father Michael was giving to Mitia Smokovnikov's class, he narrated the incident of the forged coupon, adding that the culprit had been one of the pupils of the school. "It was a very wicked thing to do," he said; "but to deny the crime is still worse. If it is true that the sin has been committed by one of you, let the guilty one confess." In saying this, Father Michael looked sharply at Mitia Smokovnikov. All the boys, following his glance, turned also to Mitia, who blushed, and felt extremely ill at ease, with large beads of perspiration on his face. Finally, he burst into tears, and ran out of the classroom. His mother, noticing his trouble, found out the truth, ran at once to the photographer's shop, paid over the twelve roubles and fifty kopeks to Maria Vasilievna, and made her promise to deny the boy's guilt. She further implored Mitia to hide the truth from everybody, and in any case to withhold it from his father.

Accordingly, when Fedor Mihailovich had heard of the incident in the divinity class, and his son, questioned by him, had denied all accusations, he called at once on the head of the school, told him what had happened, expressed his indignation at Father Michael's conduct, and said he would not let matters remain as they were.

Father Michael was sent for, and immediately fell into a hot dispute with Smokovnikov.

"A stupid woman first falsely accused my son, then retracts her accusation, and you of course could not hit on anything more sensible to do than to slander an honest and truthful boy!"

"I did not slander him, and I must beg you not to address me in such a way. You forget what is due to my cloth."

"Your cloth is of no consequence to me."

"Your perversity in matters of religion is known to everybody in the town!" replied Father Michael; and he was so transported with anger that his long thin head quivered.

"Gentlemen! Father Michael!" exclaimed the director of the school, trying to appease their wrath. But they did not listen to him.

"It is my duty as a priest to look after the religious and moral education of our pupils."

"Oh, cease your pretence to be religious! Oh, stop all this humbug of religion! As if I did not know that you believe neither in God nor Devil."

"I consider it beneath my dignity to talk to a man like you," said Father Michael, very much hurt by Smokovnikov's last words, the more so because he knew they were true.

Michael Vedensky carried on his studies in the

academy for priests, and that is why, for a long time past, he ceased to believe in what he confessed to be his creed and in what he preached from the pulpit; he only knew that men ought to force themselves to believe in what he tried to make himself believe.

Smokovnikov was not shocked by Father Michael's conduct; he only thought it illustrative of the influence the Church was beginning to exercise on society, and he told all his friends how his son had been insulted by the priest.

Seeing not only young minds, but also the elder generation, contaminated by atheistic tendencies, Father Michael became more and more convinced of the necessity of fighting those tendencies. The more he condemned the unbelief of Smokovnikov, and those like him, the more confident he grew in the firmness of his own faith, and the less he felt the need of making sure of it, or of bringing his life into harmony with it. His faith, acknowledged as such by all the world around him, became Father Michael's very best weapon with which to fight those who denied it.

The thoughts aroused in him by his conflict with Smokovnikov, together with the annoyance of being blamed by his chiefs in the school, made him carry out the purpose he had entertained ever since his wife's death — of taking monastic orders,

and of following the course carried out by some of his fellow-pupils in the academy. One of them was already a bishop, another an archimandrite and on the way to become a bishop.

At the end of the term Michael Vedensky gave up his post in the school, took orders under the name of Missael, and very soon got a post as rector in a seminary in a town on the river Volga.

XIII

MEANWHILE the yard-porter Vassily was marching on the open road down to the south.

He walked in daytime, and when night came some policeman would get him shelter in a peasant's cottage. He was given bread everywhere, and sometimes he was asked to sit down to the evening meal. In a village in the Orel district, where he had stayed for the night, he heard that a merchant who had hired the landowner's orchard for the season, was looking out for strong and able men to serve as watchmen for the fruit-crops. Vassily was tired of tramping, and as he had also no desire whatever to go back to his native village, he went to the man who owned the orchard, and got engaged as watchman for five roubles a month.

Vassily found it very agreeable to live in his

orchard shed, and all the more so when the apples and pears began to grow ripe, and when the men from the barn supplied him every day with large bundles of fresh straw from the threshing machine. He used to lie the whole day long on the fragrant straw, with fresh, delicately smelling apples in heaps at his side, looking out in every direction to prevent the village boys from stealing fruit; and he used to whistle and sing meanwhile, to amuse himself. He knew no end of songs, and had a fine voice. When peasant women and young girls came to ask for apples, and to have a chat with him, Vassily gave them larger or smaller apples according as he liked their looks, and received eggs or money in return. The rest of the time he had nothing to do, but to lie on his back and get up for his meals in the kitchen. He had only one shirt left, one of pink cotton, and that was in holes. But he was strongly built and enjoyed excellent health. When the kettle with black gruel was taken from the stove and served to the working men, Vassily used to eat enough for three, and filled the old watchman on the estate with unceasing wonder. At nights Vassily never slept. He whistled or shouted from time to time to keep off thieves, and his piercing, cat-like eyes saw clearly in the darkness.

One night a company of young lads from the village made their way stealthily to the orchard to shake down apples from the trees. Vassily, coming noiselessly from behind, attacked them; they tried to escape, but he took one of them prisoner to his master.

Vassily's first shed stood at the farthest end of the orchard, but after the pears had been picked he had to remove to another shed only forty paces away from the house of his master. He liked this new place very much. The whole day long he could see the young ladies and gentlemen enjoying themselves; going out for drives in the evenings and quite late at nights, playing the piano or the violin, and singing and dancing. He saw the ladies sitting with the young students on the window sills, engaged in animated conversation, and then going in pairs to walk the dark avenue of lime trees, lit up only by streaks of moonlight. He saw the servants running about with food and drink, he saw the cooks, the stewards, the laundresses, the gardeners, the coachmen, hard at work to supply their masters with food and drink and constant amusement. Sometimes the young people from the master's house came to the shed, and Vassily offered them the choicest apples, juicy and red. The young ladies used to take large bites out of the apples on the spot,

praising their taste, and spoke French to one another — Vassily quite understood it was all about him — and asked Vassily to sing for them.

Vassily felt the greatest admiration for his master's mode of living, which reminded him of what he had seen in Moscow; and he became more and more convinced that the only thing that mattered in life was money. He thought and thought how to get hold of a large sum of money. He remembered his former ways of making small profits whenever he could, and came to the conclusion that that was altogether wrong. Occasional stealing is of no use, he thought. He must arrange a well-prepared plan, and after getting all the information he wanted, carry out his purpose so as to avoid detection.

After the feast of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the last crop of autumn apples was gathered; the master was content with the results, paid off Vassily, and gave him an extra sum as reward for his faithful service.

Vassily put on his new jacket, and a new hat — both were presents from his master's son — but did not make his way homewards. He hated the very thought of the vulgar peasants' life. He went back to Moscow in company of some drunken soldiers, who had been watchmen in the orchard together with him. On his arrival there he at

once resolved, under cover of night, to break into the shop where he had been employed, and beaten, and then turned out by the proprietor without being paid. He knew the place well, and knew where the money was locked up. So he bade the soldiers, who helped him, keep watch outside, and forcing the courtyard door entered the shop and took all the money he could lay his hands on. All this was done very cleverly, and no trace was left of the burglary. The money Vassily had found in the shop amounted to 370 roubles. He gave a hundred roubles to his assistants, and with the rest left for another town where he gave way to dissipation in company of friends of both sexes. The police traced his movements, and when at last he was arrested and put into prison he had hardly anything left out of the money which he had stolen.

XIV

IVAN MIRONOV had become a very clever, fearless and successful horse-thief. Afimia, his wife, who at first used to abuse him for his evil ways, as she called it, was now quite content and felt proud of her husband, who possessed a new sheep-skin coat, while she also had a warm jacket and a new fur cloak.

In the village and throughout the whole district every one knew quite well that Ivan Mironov was at the bottom of all the horse-stealing; but nobody would give him away, being afraid of the consequences. Whenever suspicion fell on him, he managed to clear his character. Once during the night he stole horses from the pasture ground in the village Kolotovka. He generally preferred to steal horses from landowners or tradespeople. But this was a harder job, and when he had no chance of success he did not mind robbing peasants too. In Kolotovka he drove off the horses without making sure whose they were. He did not go himself to the spot, but sent a young and clever fellow, Gerassim, to do the stealing for him. The peasants only got to know of the theft at dawn; they rushed in all directions to hunt for the robbers. The horses, meanwhile, were hidden in a ravine in the forest lands belonging to the state.

Ivan Mironov intended to leave them there till the following night, and then to transport them with the utmost haste a hundred miles away to a man he knew. He visited Gerassim in the forest, to see how he was getting on, brought him a pie and some vodka, and was returning home by a side track in the forest where he hoped to meet nobody. But by ill-luck, he chanced on the keeper of the forest, a retired soldier.

"I say! Have you been looking for mushrooms?" asked the soldier.

"There were none to be found," answered Ivan Mironov, showing the basket of lime bark he had taken with him in case he might want it.

"Yes, mushrooms are scarce this summer," said the soldier. He stood still for a moment, pondered, and then went his way. He clearly saw that something was wrong. Ivan Mironov had no business whatever to take early morning walks in that forest. The soldier went back after a while and looked round. Suddenly he heard the snorting of horses in the ravine. He made his way cautiously to the place whence the sounds came. The grass in the ravine was trodden down, and the marks of horses' hoofs were clearly to be seen. A little further he saw Gerassim, who was sitting and eating his meal, and the horses tied to a tree.

The soldier ran to the village and brought back the bailiff, a police officer, and two witnesses. They surrounded on three sides the spot where Gerassim was sitting and seized the man. He did not deny anything; but, being drunk, told them at once how Ivan Mironov had given him plenty of drink, and induced him to steal the horses; he also said that Ivan Mironov had promised to come that night in order to take the horses away. The

peasants left the horses and Gerassim in the ravine, and hiding behind the trees prepared to lie in ambush for Ivan Mironov. When it grew dark, they heard a whistle. Gerassim answered it with a similar sound. The moment Ivan Mironov descended the slope, the peasants surrounded him and brought him back to the village. The next morning a crowd assembled in front of the bailiff's cottage. Ivan Mironov was brought out and subjected to a close examination. Stepan Pelageushkin, a tall, stooping man with long arms, an aquiline nose, and a gloomy face was the first to put questions to him. Stepan had terminated his military service, and was of a solitary turn of mind. When he had separated from his father, and started his own home, he had his first experience of losing a horse. After that he worked for two years in the mines, and made money enough to buy two horses. These two had been stolen by Ivan Mironov.

"Tell me where my horses are!" shouted Stepan, pale with fury, alternately looking at the ground and at Ivan Mironov's face.

Ivan Mironov denied his guilt. Then Stepan aimed so violent a blow at his face that he smashed his nose and the blood spurted out.

"Tell the truth, I say, or I'll kill you!"

Ivan Mironov kept silent, trying to avoid the

blows by stooping. Stepan hit him twice more with his long arm. Ivan Mironov remained silent, turning his head backwards and forwards.

"Beat him, all of you!" cried the bailiff, and the whole crowd rushed upon Ivan Mironov. He fell without a word to the ground, and then shouted,—

"Devils, wild beasts, kill me if that's what you want! I am not afraid of you!"

Stepan seized a stone out of those that had been collected for the purpose, and with a heavy blow smashed Ivan Mironov's head.

XV

IVAN MIRONOV'S murderers were brought to trial, Stepan Pelageushkine among them. He had a heavier charge to answer than the others, all the witnesses having stated that it was he who had smashed Ivan Mironov's head with a stone. Stepan concealed nothing when in court. He contented himself with explaining that, having been robbed of his two last horses, he had informed the police. Now it was comparatively easy at that time to trace the horses with the help of professional thieves among the gipsies. But the police officer would not even permit him, and no search had been ordered.

"Nothing else could be done with such a man. He has ruined us all."

"But why did not the others attack him. It was you alone who broke his head open."

"That is false. We all fell upon him. The village agreed to kill him. I only gave the final stroke. What is the use of inflicting unnecessary sufferings on a man?"

The judges were astonished at Stepan's wonderful coolness in narrating the story of his crime — how the peasants fell upon Ivan Mironov, and how he had given the final stroke. Stepan actually did not see anything particularly revolting in this murder. During his military service he had been ordered on one occasion to shoot a soldier, and, now with regard to Ivan Mironov, he saw nothing loathsome in it. "A man shot is a dead man — that's all. It was him to-day, it might be me to-morrow," he thought. Stepan was only sentenced to one year's imprisonment, which was a mild punishment for what he had done. His peasant's dress was taken away from him and put in the prison stores, and he had a prison suit and felt boots given to him instead. Stepan had never had much respect for the authorities, but now he became quite convinced that all the chiefs, all the fine folk, all except the Czar — who alone had pity on the peasants and was just — all were robbers

who suck blood out of the people. All he heard from the deported convicts, and those sentenced to hard labour, with whom he had made friends in prisons, confirmed him in his views. One man had been sentenced to hard labour for having convicted his superiors of a theft; another for having struck an official who had unjustly confiscated the property of a peasant; a third because he forged bank notes. The well-to-do-people, the merchants, might do whatever they chose and come to no harm; but a poor peasant, for a trumpery reason or for none at all, was sent to prison to become food for vermin.

He had visits from his wife while in prison. Her life without him was miserable enough, when, to make it worse, her cottage was destroyed by fire. She was completely ruined, and had to take to begging with her children. His wife's misery embittered Stepan still more. He got on very badly with all the people in the prison; was rude to every one; and one day he nearly killed the cook with an axe, and therefore got an additional year in prison. In the course of that year he received the news that his wife was dead, and that he had no longer a home.

When Stepan had finished his time in prison, he was taken to the prison stores, and his own

dress was taken down from the shelf and handed to him.

"Where am I to go now?" he asked the prison officer, putting on his old dress.

"Why, home."

"I have no home. I shall have to go on the road. Robbery will not be a pleasant occupation."

"In that case you will soon be back here."

"I am not so sure of that."

And Stepan left the prison. Nevertheless he took the road to his own place. He had nowhere else to turn.

On his way he stopped for a night's rest in an inn that had a public bar attached to it. The inn was kept by a fat man from the town, Vladimir, and he knew Stepan. He knew that Stepan had been put into prison through ill luck, and did not mind giving him shelter for the night. He was a rich man, and had persuaded his neighbour's wife to leave her husband and come to live with him. She lived in his house as his wife, and helped him in his business as well.

Stepan knew all about the innkeeper's affairs — how he had wronged the peasant, and how the woman who was living with him had left her husband. He saw her now sitting at the table in a rich dress, and looking very hot as she drank her

tea. With great condescension she asked Stepan to have tea with her. No other travellers were stopping in the inn that night. Stepan was given a place in the kitchen where he might sleep. Matrena — that was the woman's name — cleared the table and went to her room. Stepan went to lie down on the large stove in the kitchen, but he could not sleep, and the wood splinters put on the stove to dry were crackling under him, as he tossed from side to side. He could not help thinking of his host's fat paunch protruding under the belt of his shirt, which had lost its colour from having been washed ever so many times. Would not it be a good thing to make a good clean incision in that paunch. And that woman, too, he thought.

One moment he would say to himself, "I had better go from here to-morrow, bother them all!" But then again Ivan Mironov came back to his mind, and he went on thinking of the innkeeper's paunch and Matrena's white throat bathed in perspiration. "Kill I must, and it must be both!"

He heard the cock crow for the second time. "I must do it at once, or dawn will be here." He had seen in the evening before he went to bed a knife and an axe. He crawled down from the stove, took the knife and axe, and went out of the kitchen door. At that very moment he heard the lock of the entrance door open. The inn-

keeper was going out of the house to the courtyard. It all turned out contrary to what Stepan desired. He had no opportunity of using the knife; he just swung the axe and split the innkeeper's head in two. The man tumbled down on the threshold of the door, then on the ground.

Stepan stepped into the bedroom. Matrena jumped out of bed, and remained standing by its side. With the same axe Stepan killed her also.

Then he lighted the candle, took the money out of the desk, and left the house.

XVI

IN a small district town, some distance away from the other buildings, an old man, a former official, who had taken to drink, lived in his own house with his two daughters and his son-in-law. The married daughter was also addicted to drink and led a bad life, and it was the elder daughter, the widow Maria Semenovna, a wrinkled woman of fifty, who supported the whole family. She had a pension of two hundred and fifty roubles a year, and the family lived on this. Maria Semenovna did all the work in the house, looked after the drunken old father, who was very weak, attended to her sister's child, and managed all the cooking and the washing of the family. And, as is al-

ways the case, whatever there was to do, she was expected to do it, and was, moreover, continually scolded by all the three people in the house; her brother-in-law used even to beat her when he was drunk. She bore it all patiently, and as is also always the case, the more work she had to face, the quicker she managed to get through it. She helped the poor, sacrificing her own wants; she gave them her clothes, and was a ministering angel to the sick.

Once the lame, crippled village tailor was working in Maria Semenovna's house. He had to mend her old father's coat, and to mend and repair Maria Semenovna's fur-jacket for her to wear in winter when she went to market.

The lame tailor was a clever man, and a keen observer: he had seen many different people owing to his profession, and was fond of reflection, condemned as he was to a sedentary life.

Having worked a week at Maria Semenovna's, he wondered greatly about her life. One day she came to the kitchen, where he was sitting with his work, to wash a towel, and began to ask him how he was getting on. He told her of the wrong he had suffered from his brother, and how he now lived on his own allotment of land, separated from that of his brother.

"I thought I should have been better off that

way," he said. "But I am now just as poor as before."

"It is much better never to change, but to take life as it comes," said Maria Semenovna. "Take life as it comes," she repeated.

"Why, I wonder at you, Maria Semenovna," said the lame tailor. "You alone do the work, and you are so good to everybody. But they don't repay you in kind, I see."

Maria Semenovna did not utter a word in answer.

"I dare say you have found out in books that we are rewarded in heaven for the good we do here."

"We don't know that. But we must try to do the best we can."

"Is it said so in books?"

"In books as well," she said, and read to him the Sermon on the Mount. The tailor was much impressed. When he had been paid for his job and gone home, he did not cease to think about Maria Semenovna, both what she had said and what she had read to him.

XVII

PETER NIKOLAEVICH SVENTIZKY's views of the peasantry had now changed for the worse, and the

peasants had an equally bad opinion of him. In the course of a single year they felled twenty-seven oaks in his forest, and burnt a barn which had not been insured. Peter Nikolaevich came to the conclusion that there was no getting on with the people around him.

At that very time the landowner, Liventsov, was trying to find a manager for his estate, and the Marshal of the Nobility recommended Peter Nikolaevich as the ablest man in the district in the management of land. The estate owned by Liventsov was an extremely large one, but there was no revenue to be got out of it, as the peasants appropriated all its wealth to their own profit. Peter Nikolaevich undertook to bring everything into order; rented out his own land to somebody else; and settled with his wife on the Liventsov estate, in a distant province on the river Volga.

Peter Nikolaevich was always fond of order, and wanted things to be regulated by law; and now he felt less able of allowing those raw and rude peasants to take possession, quite illegally too, of property that did not belong to them. He was glad of the opportunity of giving them a good lesson, and set seriously to work at once. One peasant was sent to prison for stealing wood; to another he gave a thrashing for not having made way for him on the road with his cart, and for not

having lifted his cap to salute him. As to the pasture ground which was a subject of dispute, and was considered by the peasants as their property, Peter Nikolaevich informed the peasants that any of their cattle grazing on it would be driven away by him.

The spring came and the peasants, just as they had done in previous years, drove their cattle on to the meadows belonging to the landowner. Peter Nikolaevich called some of the men working on the estate and ordered them to drive the cattle into his yard. The peasants were working in the fields, and, disregarding the screaming of the women, Peter Nikolaevich's men succeeded in driving in the cattle. When they came home the peasants went in a crowd to the cattle-yard on the estate, and asked for their cattle. Peter Nikolaevich came out to talk to them with a gun slung on his shoulder; he had just returned from a ride of inspection. He told them that he would not let them have their cattle unless they paid a fine of fifty kopeks for each of the horned cattle, and twenty kopeks for each sheep. The peasants loudly declared that the pasture ground was their property, because their fathers and grandfathers had used it, and protested that he had no right whatever to lay hand on their cattle.

"Give back our cattle, or you will regret it,"

said an old man coming up to Peter Nikolaevich.

"How shall I regret it?" cried Peter Nikolaevich, turning pale, and coming close to the old man.

"Give them back, you villain, and don't provoke us."

"What?" cried Peter Nikolaevich, and slapped the old man in the face.

"You dare to strike me? Come along, you fellows, let us take back our cattle by force."

The crowd drew close to him. Peter Nikolaevich tried to push his way through them, but the peasants resisted him. Again he tried force.

His gun, accidentally discharged in the *mêlée*, killed one of the peasants. Instantly the fight began. Peter Nikolaevich was trodden down, and five minutes later his mutilated body was dragged into the ravine.

The murderers were tried by martial law, and two of them sentenced to the gallows.

XVIII

IN the village where the lame tailor lived, in the Zemliansk district of the Voronesh province, five rich peasants hired from the landowner a hundred and five acres of rich arable land, black as tar, and let it out on lease to the rest of the peasants at

fifteen to eighteen roubles an acre. Not one acre was given under twelve roubles. They got a very profitable return, and the five acres which were left to each of their company practically cost them nothing. One of the five peasants died, and the lame tailor received an offer to take his place.

When they began to divide the land, the tailor gave up drinking vodka, and, being consulted as to how much land was to be divided, and to whom it should be given, he proposed to give allotments to all on equal terms, not taking from the tenants more than was due for each piece of land out of the sum paid to the landowner.

"Why so?"

"We are no heathens, I should think," he said. "It is all very well for the masters to be unfair, but we are true Christians. We must do as God bids. Such is the law of Christ."

"Where have you got that law from?"

"It is in the Book, in the Gospels. Just come to me on Sunday. I will read you a few passages, and we will have a talk afterwards."

They did not all come to him on Sunday, but three came, and he began reading to them.

He read five chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel, and they talked. One man only, Ivan Chouev, accepted the lesson and carried it out completely, following the rule of Christ in everything from

that day. His family did the same. Out of the arable land he took only what was his due, and refused to take more.

The lame tailor and Ivan had people calling on them, and some of these people began to grasp the meaning of the Gospels, and in consequence gave up smoking, drinking, swearing, and using bad language and tried to help one another. They also ceased to go to church, and took their ikons to the village priest, saying they did not want them any more. The priest was frightened, and reported what had occurred to the bishop. The bishop was at a loss what to do. At last he resolved to send the archimandrite Missael to the village, the one who had formerly been Mitia Smokovnikov's teacher of religion.

XIX

ASKING Father Missael on his arrival to take a seat, the bishop told him what had happened in his diocese.

"It all comes from weakness of spirit and from ignorance. You are a learned man, and I rely on you. Go to the village, call the parishioners together, and convince them of their error."

"If your Grace bids me go, and you give me your blessing, I will do my best," said Father

Missael. He was very pleased with the task entrusted to him. Every opportunity he could find to demonstrate the firmness of his faith was a boon to him. In trying to convince others he was chiefly intent on persuading himself that he was really a firm believer.

"Do your best. I am greatly distressed about my flock," said the bishop, leisurely taking a cup with his white plump hands from the servant who brought in the tea.

"Why is there only one kind of jam? Bring another," he said to the servant. "I am greatly distressed," he went on, turning to Father Missael.

Missael earnestly desired to prove his zeal; but, being a man of small means, he asked to be paid for the expenses of his journey; and being afraid of the rough people who might be ill-disposed towards him, he also asked the bishop to get him an order from the governor of the province, so that the local police might help him in case of need. The bishop complied with his wishes, and Missael got his things ready with the help of his servant and his cook. They furnished him with a case full of wine, and a basket with the victuals he might need in going to such a lonely place. Fully provided with all he wanted, he started for the village to which he was commissioned. He

was pleasantly conscious of the importance of his mission. All his doubts as to his own faith passed away, and he was now fully convinced of its reality.

His thoughts, far from being concerned with the real foundation of his creed — this was accepted as an axiom — were occupied with the arguments used against the forms of worship.

XX

THE village priest and his wife received Father Missael with great honours, and the next day after he had arrived the parishioners were invited to assemble in the church. Missael in a new silk cassock, with a large cross on his chest, and his long hair carefully combed, ascended the pulpit; the priest stood at his side, the deacons and the choir at a little distance behind him, and the side entrances were guarded by the police. The dissenters also came in their dirty sheepskin coats.

After the service Missael delivered a sermon, admonishing the dissenters to return to the bosom of their mother, the Church, threatening them with the torments of hell, and promising full forgiveness to those who would repent.

The dissenters kept silent at first. Then, being asked questions, they gave answers. To the

question why they dissented, they said that their chief reason was the fact that the Church worshipped gods made of wood, which, far from being ordained, were condemned by the Scriptures.

When asked by Missael whether they actually considered the holy ikons to be mere planks of wood, Chouev answered,—

“Just look at the back of any ikon you choose and you will see what they are made of.”

When asked why they turned against the priests, their answer was that the Scripture says: “As you have received it without fee, so you must give it to the others; whereas the priests require payment for the grace they bestow by the sacraments.” To all attempts which Missael made to oppose them by arguments founded on Holy Writ, the tailor and Ivan Chouev gave calm but very firm answers, contradicting his assertions by appeal to the Scriptures, which they knew uncommonly well.

Missael got angry and threatened them with persecution by the authorities. Their answer was: It is said, I have been persecuted and so will you be.

The discussion came to nothing, and all would have ended well if Missael had not preached the next day at mass, denouncing the wicked seducers of the faithful and saying that they deserved the worst punishment. Coming out of the church, the

crowd of peasants began to consult whether it would not be well to give the infidels a good lesson for disturbing the minds of the community. The same day, just when Missael was enjoying some salmon and gangfish, dining at the village priest's in company with the inspector, a violent brawl arose in the village. The peasants came in a crowd to Chouev's cottage, and waited for the dissenters to come out in order to give them a thrashing.

The dissenters assembled in the cottage numbered about twenty men and women. Missael's sermon and the attitude of the orthodox peasants, together with their threats, aroused in the mind of the dissenters angry feelings, to which they had before been strangers. It was near evening, the women had to go and milk the cows, and the peasants were still standing and waiting at the door.

A boy who stepped out of the door was beaten and driven back into the house. The people within began consulting what was to be done, and could come to no agreement. The tailor said, "We must bear whatever is done to us, and not resist." Chouev replied that if they decided on that course they would, all of them, be beaten to death. In consequence, he seized a poker and went out of the house. "Come!" he shouted,

"let us follow the law of Moses!" And, falling upon the peasants, he knocked out one man's eye, and in the meanwhile all those who had been in his house contrived to get out and make their way home.

Chouev was thrown into prison and charged with sedition and blasphemy.

XXI

Two years previous to those events a strong and handsome young girl of an eastern type, Katia Turchaninova, came from the Don military settlements to St. Petersburg to study in the university college for women. In that town she met a student, Turin, the son of a district governor in the Simbirsk province, and fell in love with him. But her love was not of the ordinary type, and she had no desire to become his wife and the mother of his children. He was a dear comrade to her, and their chief bond of union was a feeling of revolt they had in common, as well as the hatred they bore, not only to the existing forms of government, but to all those who represented that government. They had also in common the sense that they both excelled their enemies in culture, in brains, as well as in morals. Katia Turchaninova was a gifted girl, possessed of a good mem-

ory, by means of which she easily mastered the lectures she attended. She was successful in her examinations, and, apart from that, read all the newest books. She was certain that her vocation was not to bear and rear children, and even looked on such a task with disgust and contempt. She thought herself chosen by destiny to destroy the present government, which was fettering the best abilities of the nation, and to reveal to the people a higher standard of life, inculcated by the latest writers of other countries. She was handsome, a little inclined to stoutness: she had a good complexion, shining black eyes, abundant black hair. She inspired the men she knew with feelings she neither wished nor had time to share, busy as she was with propaganda work, which consisted chiefly in mere talking. She was not displeased, however, to inspire these feelings; and, without dressing too smartly, did not neglect her appearance. She liked to be admired, as it gave her opportunities of showing how little she prized what was valued so highly by other women.

In her views concerning the method of fighting the government she went further than the majority of her comrades, and than her friend Turin; all means, she taught, were justified in such a struggle, not excluding murder. And yet, with all her revolutionary ideas, Katia Turchaninova was in her

soul a very kind girl, ready to sacrifice herself for the welfare and the happiness of other people, and sincerely pleased when she could do a kindness to anybody, a child, an old person, or an animal.

She went in the summer to stay with a friend, a schoolmistress in a small town on the river Volga. Turin lived near that town, on his father's estate. He often came to see the two girls; they gave each other books to read, and had long discussions, expressing their common indignation with the state of affairs in the country. The district doctor, a friend of theirs, used also to join them on many occasions.

The estate of the Turins was situated in the neighbourhood of the Liventsov estate, the one that was entrusted to the management of Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky. Soon after Peter Nikolaevich had settled there, and begun to enforce order, young Turin, having observed an independent tendency in the peasants on the Liventsov estate, as well as their determination to uphold their rights, became interested in them. He came often to the village to talk with the men, and developed his socialistic theories, insisting particularly on the nationalisation of the land.

After Peter Nikolaevich had been murdered, and the murderers sent to trial, the revolutionary

group of the small town boiled over with indignation, and did not shrink from openly expressing it. The fact of Turin's visits to the village and his propaganda work among the students, became known to the authorities during the trial. A search was made in his house; and, as the police found a few revolutionary leaflets among his effects, he was arrested and transferred to prison in St. Petersburg.

Katia Turchaninova followed him to the metropolis, and went to visit him in prison. She was not admitted on the day she came, and was told to come on the day fixed by regulations for visits to the prisoners. When that day arrived, and she was finally allowed to see him, she had to talk to him through two gratings separating the prisoner from his visitor. This visit increased her indignation against the authorities. And her feelings become all the more revolutionary after a visit she paid to the office of a gendarme officer who had to deal with the Turin case. The officer, a handsome man, seemed obviously disposed to grant her exceptional favours in visiting the prisoner, if she would allow him to make love to her. Disgusted with him, she appealed to the chief of police. He pretended — just as the officer did when talking officially to her — to be powerless himself, and to depend entirely on orders

coming from the minister of state. She sent a petition to the minister asking for an interview, which was refused.

Then she resolved to do a desperate thing and bought a revolver.

XXII

THE minister was receiving petitioners at the usual hour appointed for the reception. He had talked successively to three of them, and now a pretty young woman with black eyes, who was holding a petition in her left hand, approached. The minister's eyes gleamed when he saw how attractive the petitioner was, but recollecting his high position he put on a serious face.

"What do you want?" he asked, coming down to where she stood. Without answering his question the young woman quickly drew a revolver from under her cloak and aiming it at the minister's chest fired — but missed him.

The minister rushed at her, trying to seize her hand, but she escaped, and taking a step back, fired a second time. The minister ran out of the room. The woman was immediately seized. She was trembling violently, and could not utter a single word; after a while she suddenly burst into a hys-

terical laugh. The minister was not even wounded.

That woman was Katia Turchaninova. She was put into the prison of preliminary detention. The minister received congratulations and marks of sympathy from the highest quarters, and even from the emperor himself, who appointed a commission to investigate the plot that had led to the attempted assassination. As a matter of fact there was no plot whatever, but the police officials and the detectives set to work with the utmost zeal to discover all the threads of the non-existing conspiracy. They did everything to deserve the fees they were paid; they got up in the small hours of the morning, searched one house after another, took copies of papers and of books they found, read diaries, personal letters, made extracts from them on the very best notepaper and in beautiful handwriting, interrogated Katia Turchaninova ever so many times, and confronted her with all those whom they suspected of conspiracy, in order to extort from her the names of her accomplices.

The minister, a good-natured man at heart, was sincerely sorry for the pretty girl. But he said to himself that he was bound to consider his high state duties imposed upon him, even though they did not imply much work and trouble. So, when his former colleague, a chamberlain and a friend

of the Turins, met him at a court ball and tried to rouse his pity for Turin and the girl Turchaninova, he shrugged his shoulders, stretching the red ribbon on his white waistcoat, and said: "*Je ne demanderais pas mieux que de relacher cette pauvre fillette, mais vous savez le devoir.*" And in the meantime Katia Turchaninova was kept in prison. She was at times in a quiet mood, communicated with her fellow-prisoners by knocking on the walls, and read the books that were sent to her. But then came days when she had fits of desperate fury, knocking with her fists against the wall, screaming and laughing like a madwoman.

XXIII

ONE day Maria Semenovna came home from the treasurer's office, where she had received her pension. On her way she met a schoolmaster, a friend of hers.

"Good day, Maria Semenovna! Have you received your money?" the schoolmaster asked, in a loud voice from the other side of the street.

"I have," answered Maria Semenovna. "But it was not much; just enough to fill the holes."

"Oh, there must be some tidy pickings out of such a lot of money," said the schoolmaster, and passed on, after having said good-bye.

"Good-bye," said Maria Semenovna. While she was looking at her friend, she met a tall man face to face, who had very long arms and a stern look in his eyes. Coming to her house, she was very startled on again seeing the same man with the long arms, who had evidently followed her. He remained standing another moment after she had gone in, then turned and walked away.

Maria Semenovna felt somewhat frightened at first. But when she had entered the house, and had given her father and her nephew Fedia the presents she had brought for them, and she had patted the dog Treasure, who whined with joy, she forgot her fears. She gave the money to her father and began to work, as there was always plenty for her to do.

The man she met face to face was Stepan.

After he had killed the innkeeper, he did not return to town. Strange to say, he was not sorry to have committed that murder. His mind went back to the murdered man over and over again during the following day; and he liked the recollection of having done the thing so skilfully, so cleverly, that nobody would ever discover it, and he would not therefore be prevented from murdering other people in the same way. Sitting in the public-house and having his tea, he looked at the people around him with the same thought how

he should murder them. In the evening he called at a carter's, a man from his village, to spend the night at his house. The carter was not in. He said he would wait for him, and in the meanwhile began talking to the carter's wife. But when she moved to the stove, with her back turned to him, the idea entered his mind to kill her. He marvelled at himself at first, and shook his head; but the next moment he seized the knife he had hidden in his boot, knocked the woman down on the floor, and cut her throat. When the children began to scream, he killed them also and went away. He did not look out for another place to spend the night, but at once left the town. In a village some distance away he went to the inn and slept there. The next day he returned to the district town, and there he overheard in the street Maria Semenovna's talk with the schoolmaster. Her look frightened him, but yet he made up his mind to creep into her house, and rob her of the money she had received. When the night came he broke the lock and entered the house. The first person who heard his steps was the younger daughter, the married one. She screamed. Stepan stabbed her immediately with his knife. Her husband woke up and fell upon Stepan, seized him by his throat, and struggled with him desperately. But Stepan was the stronger man and overpowered

him. After murdering him, Stepan, excited by the long fight, stepped into the next room behind a partition. That was Maria Semenovna's bedroom. She rose in her bed, looked at Stepan with her mild frightened eyes, and crossed herself.

Once more her look scared Stepan. He dropped his eyes.

"Where is your money?" he asked, without raising his face.

She did not answer.

"Where is the money?" asked Stepan again, showing her his knife.

"How can you . . ." she said.

"You will see how."

Stepan came close to her, in order to seize her hands and prevent her struggling with him, but she did not even try to lift her arms or offer any resistance; she pressed her hands to her chest, and sighed heavily.

"Oh, what a great sin!" she cried. "How can you! Have mercy on yourself. To destroy somebody's soul . . . and worse, your own! . . ."

Stepan could not stand her voice any longer, and drew his knife sharply across her throat. "Stop that talk!" he said. She fell back with a hoarse cry, and the pillow was stained with blood. He

turned away, and went round the rooms in order to collect all he thought worth taking. Having made a bundle of the most valuable things, he lighted a cigarette, sat down for a while, brushed his clothes, and left the house. He thought this murder would not matter to him more than those he had committed before; but before he got a night's lodging, he felt suddenly so exhausted that he could not walk any farther. He stepped down into the gutter and remained lying there the rest of the night, and the next day and the next night.

PART SECOND

I

THE whole time he was lying in the gutter Stepan saw continually before his eyes the thin, kindly, and frightened face of Maria Semenovna, and seemed to hear her voice. "How can you?" she went on saying in his imagination, with her peculiar lisping voice. Stepan saw over again and over again before him all he had done to her. In horror he shut his eyes, and shook his hairy head, to drive away these thoughts and recollections. For a moment he would get rid of them, but in their place horrid black faces with red eyes appeared and frightened him continuously. They grinned at him, and kept repeating, "Now you have done away with her you must do away with yourself, or we will not leave you alone." He opened his eyes, and again he saw *her* and heard her voice; and felt an immense pity for her and a deep horror and disgust with himself. Once more he shut his eyes, and the black faces reappeared. Towards the evening of the next day he rose and went, with hardly any strength left,

to a public-house. There he ordered a drink, and repeated his demands over and over again, but no quantity of liquor could make him intoxicated. He was sitting at a table, and swallowed silently one glass after another.

A police officer came in. "Who are you?" he asked Stepan.

"I am the man who murdered all the Dobrotvorov people last night," he answered.

He was arrested, bound with ropes, and brought to the nearest police-station; the next day he was transferred to the prison in the town. The inspector of the prison recognised him as an old inmate, and a very turbulent one; and, hearing that he had now become a real criminal, accosted him very harshly.

"You had better be quiet here," he said in a hoarse voice, frowning, and protruding his lower jaw. "The moment you don't behave, I'll flog you to death! Don't try to escape — I will see to that!"

"I have no desire to escape," said Stepan, dropping his eyes. "I surrendered of my own free will."

"Shut up! You must look straight into your superior's eyes when you talk to him," cried the inspector, and struck Stepan with his fist under the jaw.

At that moment Stepan again saw the murdered woman before him, and heard her voice; he did not pay attention, therefore, to the inspector's words.

"What?" he asked, coming to his senses when he felt the blow on his face.

"Be off! Don't pretend you don't hear."

The inspector expected Stepan to be violent, to talk to the other prisoners, to make attempts to escape from prison. But nothing of the kind ever happened. Whenever the guard or the inspector himself looked into his cell through the hole in the door, they saw Stepan sitting on a bag filled with straw, holding his head with his hands and whispering to himself. On being brought before the examining magistrate charged with the inquiry into his case, he did not behave like an ordinary convict. He was very absent-minded, hardly listening to the questions; but when he heard what was asked, he answered truthfully, causing the utmost perplexity to the magistrate, who, accustomed as he was to the necessity of being very clever and very cunning with convicts, felt a strange sensation just as if he were lifting up his foot to ascend a step and found none. Stepan told him the story of all his murders; and did it frowning, with a set look, in a quiet, businesslike voice, trying to recollect all the circumstances of

his crimes. "He stepped out of the house," said Stepan, telling the tale of his first murder, "and stood barefooted at the door; I hit him, and he just groaned; I went to his wife, . . ." And so on.

One day the magistrate, visiting the prison cells, asked Stepan whether there was anything he had to complain of, or whether he had any wishes that might be granted him. Stepan said he had no wishes whatever, and had nothing to complain of the way he was treated in prison. The magistrate, on leaving him, took a few steps in the foul passage, then stopped and asked the governor who had accompanied him in his visit how this prisoner was behaving.

"I simply wonder at him," said the governor, who was very pleased with Stepan, and spoke kindly of him. "He has now been with us about two months, and could be held up as a model of good behaviour. But I am afraid he is plotting some mischief. He is a daring man, and exceptionally strong."

II

DURING the first month in prison Stepan suffered from the same agonising vision. He saw the grey wall of his cell, he heard the sounds of the

prison; the noise of the cell below him, where a number of convicts were confined together; the striking of the prison clock; the steps of the sentry in the passage; but at the same time he saw *her* with that kindly face which conquered his heart the very first time he met her in the street, with that thin, strongly-marked neck, and he heard her soft, lisping, pathetic voice: "To destroy somebody's soul . . . and, worst of all, your own. . . . How can you? . . ."

After a while her voice would die away, and then black faces would appear. They would appear whether he had his eyes open or shut. With his closed eyes he saw them more distinctly. When he opened his eyes they vanished for a moment, melting away into the walls and the door; but after a while they reappeared and surrounded him from three sides, grinning at him and saying over and over: "Make an end! Make an end! Hang yourself! Set yourself on fire!" Stepan shook all over when he heard that, and tried to say all the prayers he knew: "Our Lady" or "Our Father." At first this seemed to help. In saying his prayers he began to recollect his whole life; his father, his mother, the village, the dog "Wolf," the old grandfather lying on the stove, the bench on which the children used to play; then the girls in the village with their songs, his horses

and how they had been stolen, and how the thief was caught and how he killed him with a stone. He recollected also the first prison he was in and his leaving it, and the fat innkeeper, the carter's wife and the children. Then again *she* came to his mind and again he was terrified. Throwing his prison overcoat off his shoulders, he jumped out of bed, and, like a wild animal in a cage, began pacing up and down his tiny cell, hastily turning round when he had reached the damp walls. Once more he tried to pray, but it was of no use now.

The autumn came with its long nights. One evening when the wind whistled and howled in the pipes, Stepan, after he had paced up and down his cell for a long time, sat down on his bed. He felt he could not struggle any more; the black demons had overpowered him, and he had to submit. For some time he had been looking at the funnel of the oven. If he could fix on the knob of its lid a loop made of thin shreds of narrow linen straps it would hold. . . . But he would have to manage it very cleverly. He set to work, and spent two days in making straps out of the linen bag on which he slept. When the guard came into the cell he covered the bed with his overcoat. He tied the straps with big knots and made them double, in order that they might be strong enough

to hold his weight. During these preparations he was free from tormenting visions. When the straps were ready he made a slip-knot out of them, and put it round his neck, stood up in his bed, and hanged himself. But at the very moment that his tongue began to protrude the straps got loose, and he fell down. The guard rushed in at the noise. The doctor was called in, Stepan was brought to the infirmary. The next day he recovered, and was removed from the infirmary, no more to solitary confinement, but to share the common cell with other prisoners.

In the common cell he lived in the company of twenty men, but felt as if he were quite alone. He did not notice the presence of the rest; did not speak to anybody, and was tormented by the old agony. He felt it most of all when the men were sleeping and he alone could not get one moment of sleep. Continually he saw *her* before his eyes, heard her voice, and then again the black devils with their horrible eyes came and tortured him in the usual way.

He again tried to say his prayers, but, just as before, it did not help him. One day when, after his prayers, she was again before his eyes, he began to implore her dear soul to forgive him his sin, and release him. Towards morning, when he fell down quite exhausted on his crushed linen bag, he

fell asleep at once, and in his dream she came to him with her thin, wrinkled, and severed neck. "Will you forgive me?" he asked. She looked at him with her mild eyes and did not answer. "Will you forgive me?" And so he asked her three times. But she did not say a word, and he awoke. From that time onwards he suffered less, and seemed to come to his senses, looked around him, and began for the first time to talk to the other men in the cell.

III

STEPAN'S cell was shared among others by the former yard-porter, Vassily, who had been sentenced to deportation for robbery, and by Chouev, sentenced also to deportation. Vassily sang songs the whole day long with his fine voice, or told his adventures to the other men in the cell. Chouev was working at something all day, mending his clothes, or reading the Gospel and the Psalter.

Stepan asked him why he was put into prison, and Chouev answered that he was being persecuted because of his true Christian faith by the priests, who were all of them hypocrites and hated those who followed the law of Christ. Stepan asked what that true law was, and Chouev made clear to him that the true law consists in not wor-

shipping gods made with hands, but worshipping the spirit and the truth. He told him how he had learnt the truth from the lame tailor at the time when they were dividing the land.

"And what will become of those who have done evil?" asked Stepan.

"The Scriptures give an answer to that," said Chouev, and read aloud to him Matthew xxv. 31:—

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth His sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When

saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Vassily, who was sitting on the floor at Chouev's side, and was listening to his reading the Gospel, nodded his handsome head in approval. "True," he said in a resolute tone. "Go, you cursed villains, into everlasting punishment, since you did

not give food to the hungry, but swallowed it all yourself. Serves them right! I have read the holy Nikodim's writings," he added, showing off his erudition.

"And will they never be pardoned?" asked Stepan, who had listened silently, with his hairy head bent low down.

"Wait a moment, and be silent," said Chouev to Vassily, who went on talking about the rich who had not given meat to the stranger, nor visited him in the prison.

"Wait, I say!" said Chouev, again turning over the leaves of the Gospel. Having found what he was looking for, Chouev smoothed the page with his large and strong hand, which had become exceedingly white in prison:

"And there were also two other malefactors, led with Him" — it means with Christ — "to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, — 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided Him, saying, — 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He be Christ, the chosen of God.' And the soldiers

also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, 'If Thou be the King of the Jews save Thyself.' And a superscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, 'This is the King of the Jews.' And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, 'If thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.' But the other answering rebuked Him, saying, 'Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.' And he said unto Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.' And Jesus said unto him, 'Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.' "

Stepan did not say anything, and was sitting in thought, as if he were listening.

Now he knew what the true faith was. Those only will be saved who have given food and drink to the poor and visited the prisoners; those who have not done it, go to hell. And yet the malefactor had repented on the cross, and went nevertheless to paradise. This did not strike him as being inconsistent. Quite the contrary. The one confirmed the other: the fact that the merciful will go to Heaven, and the unmerciful to hell, meant that everybody ought to be merciful, and

the malefactor having been forgiven by Christ meant that Christ was merciful. This was all new to Stepan, and he wondered why it had been hidden from him so long.

From that day onward he spent all his free time with Chouev, asking him questions and listening to him. He saw but a single truth at the bottom of the teaching of Christ as revealed to him by Chouev: that all men are brethren, and that they ought to love and pity one another in order that all might be happy. And when he listened to Chouev, everything that was consistent with this fundamental truth came to him like a thing he had known before and only forgotten since, while whatever he heard that seemed to contradict it, he would take no notice of, as he thought that he simply had not understood the real meaning. And from that time Stepan was a different man.

IV

STEPAN had been very submissive and meek ever since he came to the prison, but now he made the prison authorities and all his fellow-prisoners wonder at the change in him. Without being ordered, and out of his proper turn he would do all the very hardest work in prison, and the dirtiest too. But in spite of his humility, the other pris-

oners stood in awe of him, and were afraid of him, as they knew he was a resolute man, possessed of great physical strength. Their respect for him increased after the incident of the two tramps who fell upon him; he wrenched himself loose from them and broke the arm of one of them in the fight. These tramps had gambled with a young prisoner of some means and deprived him of all his money. Stepan took his part, and deprived the tramps of their winnings. The tramps poured their abuse on him; but when they attacked him, he got the better of them. When the Governor asked how the fight had come about, the tramps declared that it was Stepan who had begun it. Stepan did not try to exculpate himself, and bore patiently his sentence which was three days in the punishment-cell, and after that solitary confinement.

In his solitary cell he suffered because he could no longer listen to Chouev and his Gospel. He was also afraid that the former visions of *her* and of the black devils would reappear to torment him. But the visions were gone for good. His soul was full of new and happy ideas. He felt glad to be alone if only he could read, and if he had the Gospel. He knew that he might have got hold of the Gospel, but he could not read.

He had started to learn the alphabet in his

boyhood, but could not grasp the joining of the syllables, and remained illiterate. He made up his mind to start reading anew, and asked the guard to bring him the Gospels. They were brought to him, and he sat down to work. He contrived to recollect the letters, but could not join them into syllables. He tried as hard as he could to understand how the letters ought to be put together to form words, but with no result whatever. He lost his sleep, had no desire to eat, and a deep sadness came over him, which he was unable to shake off.

"Well, have you not yet mastered it?" asked the guard one day.

"No."

"Do you know 'Our Father'?"

"I do."

"Since you do, read it in the Gospels. Here it is," said the guard, showing him the prayer in the Gospels. Stepan began to read it, comparing the letters he knew with the familiar sounds.

And all of a sudden the mystery of the syllables was revealed to him, and he began to read. This was a great joy. From that moment he could read, and the meaning of the words, spelt out with such great pains, became more significant.

Stepan did not mind any more being alone. He was so full of his work that he did not feel

glad when he was transferred back to the common cell, his private cell being needed for a political prisoner who had been just sent to prison.

V

IN the meantime Mahin, the schoolboy who had taught his friend Smokovnikov to forge the coupon, had finished his career at school and then at the university, where he had studied law. He had the advantage of being liked by women, and as he had won favour with a vice-minister's former mistress, he was appointed when still young as examining magistrate. He was dishonest, had debts, had gambled, and had seduced many women; but he was clever, sagacious, and a good magistrate. He was appointed to the court of the district where Stepan Pelageushkine had been tried. When Stepan was brought to him the first time to give evidence, his sincere and quiet answers puzzled the magistrate. He somehow unconsciously felt that this man, brought to him in fetters and with a shorn head, guarded by two soldiers who were waiting to take him back to prison, had a free soul and was immeasurably superior to himself. He was in consequence somewhat troubled, and had to summon up all his courage in order to go on with the inquiry and

not blunder in his questions. He was amazed that Stepan should narrate the story of his crimes as if they had been things of long ago, and committed not by him but by some different man.

"Had you no pity for them?" asked Mahin.

"No. I did not know then."

"Well, and now?"

Stepan smiled with a sad smile. "Now," he said, "I would not do it even if I were to be burned alive."

"But why?"

"Because I have come to know that all men are brethren."

"What about me? Am I your brother also?"

"Of course you are."

"And how is it that I, your brother, am sending you to hard labour?"

"It is because you don't know."

"What do I not know?"

"Since you judge, it means obviously that you don't know."

"Go on. . . . What next?"

VI

Now it was not Chouev, but Stepan who used to read the gospel in the common cell. Some of the prisoners were singing coarse songs, while others

listened to Stepan reading the gospel and talking about what he had read. The most attentive among those who listened were two of the prisoners, Vassily, and a convict called Mahorkin, a murderer who had become a hangman. Twice during his stay in this prison he was called upon to do duty as hangman, and both times in far-away places where nobody could be found to execute the sentences.

Two of the peasants who had killed Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, had been sentenced to the gallows, and Mahorkin was ordered to go to Pensa to hang them. On all previous occasions he used to write a petition to the governor of the province — he knew well how to read and to write — stating that he had been ordered to fulfil his duty, and asking for money for his expenses. But now, to the greatest astonishment of the prison authorities, he said he did not intend to go, and added that he would not be a hangman any more.

“And what about being flogged?” cried the governor of the prison.

“I will have to bear it, as the law commands us not to kill.”

“Did you get that from Pelageushkine? A nice sort of a prison prophet! You just wait and see what this will cost you!”

When Mahin was told of that incident, he was

greatly impressed by the fact of Stepan's influence on the hangman, who refused to do his duty, running the risk of being hanged himself for insubordination.

VII

AT an evening party at the Eropkins, Mahin, who was paying attentions to the two young daughters of the house — they were rich matches, both of them — having earned great applause for his fine singing and playing the piano, began telling the company about the strange convict who had converted the hangman. Mahin told his story very accurately, as he had a very good memory, which was all the more retentive because of his total indifference to those with whom he had to deal. He never paid the slightest attention to other people's feelings, and was therefore better able to keep all they did or said in his memory. He got interested in Stepan Pelageushkine, and, although he did not thoroughly understand him, yet asked himself involuntarily what was the matter with the man? He could not find an answer, but feeling that there was certainly something remarkable going on in Stepan's soul, he told the company at the Eropkins all about Stepan's conversion of the hangman, and also about his strange behaviour in prison, his reading the Gospels and his great

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influence on the rest of the prisoners. All this made a special impression on the younger daughter of the family, Lisa, a girl of eighteen, who was just recovering from the artificial life she had been living in a boarding-school; she felt as if she had emerged out of water, and was taking in the fresh air of true life with ecstasy. She asked Mahin to tell her more about the man Pelageushkine, and to explain to her how such a great change had come over him. Mahin told her what he knew from the police official about Stepan's last murder, and also what he had heard from Pelageushkine himself — how he had been conquered by the humility, mildness, and fearlessness of a kind woman, who had been his last victim, and how his eyes had been opened, while the reading of the Gospels had completed the change in him.

Lisa Eropkin was not able to sleep that night. For a couple of months a struggle had gone on in her heart between society life, into which her sister was dragging her, and her infatuation for Mahin, combined with a desire to reform him. This second desire now became the stronger. She had already heard about poor Maria Semenovna. But, after that kind woman had been murdered in such a ghastly way, and after Mahin, who learnt it from Stepan, had communicated to her all the facts concerning Maria Semenovna's

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life, Lisa herself passionately desired to become like her. She was a rich girl, and was afraid that Mahin had been courting her because of her money. So she resolved to give all she possessed to the poor, and told Mahin about it.

Mahin was very glad to prove his disinterestedness, and told Lisa that he loved her and not her money. Such proof of his innate nobility made him admire himself greatly. Mahin helped Lisa to carry out her decision. And the more he did so, the more he came to realise the new world of Lisa's spiritual ambitions, quite unknown to him heretofore.

VIII

ALL were silent in the common cell. Stepan was lying in his bed, but was not yet asleep. Vassily approached him, and, pulling him by his leg, asked him in a whisper to get up and to come to him. Stepan stepped out of his bed, and came up to Vassily.

"Do me a kindness, brother," said Vassily.

"Help me!"

"In what?"

"I am going to fly from the prison."

Vassily told Stepan that he had everything ready for his flight.

"To-morrow I shall stir them up —" He pointed to the prisoners asleep in their beds. "They will give me away, and I shall be transferred to the cell in the upper floor. I know my way from there. What I want you for is to unscrew the prop in the door of the mortuary."

"I can do that. But where will you go?"

"I don't care where. Are not there plenty of wicked people in every place?"

"Quite so, brother. But it is not our business to judge them."

"I am not a murderer, to be sure. I have not destroyed a living soul in my life. As for stealing, I don't see any harm in that. As if they have not robbed us!"

"Let them answer for it themselves, if they do."

"Bother them all! Suppose I rob a church, who will be hurt? This time I will take care not to break into a small shop, but will get hold of a lot of money, and then I will help people with it. I will give it to all good people."

One of the prisoners rose in his bed and listened. Stepan and Vassily broke off their conversation. The next day Vassily carried out his idea. He began complaining of the bread in prison, saying it was moist, and induced the prisoners to call the governor and to tell him of their

discontent. The governor came, abused them all, and when he heard it was Vassily who had stirred up the men, he ordered him to be transferred into solitary confinement in the cell on the upper floor. This was all Vassily wanted.

IX

VASSILY knew well that cell on the upper floor. He knew its floor, and began at once to take out bits of it. When he had managed to get under the floor he took out pieces of the ceiling beneath, and jumped down into the mortuary a floor below. That day only one corpse was lying on the table. There in the corner of the room were stored bags to make hay mattresses for the prisoners. Vassily knew about the bags, and that was why the mortuary served his purposes. The prop in the door had been unscrewed and put in again. He took it out, opened the door, and went out into the passage to the lavatory which was being built. In the lavatory was a large hole connecting the third floor with the basement floor. After having found the door of the lavatory he went back to the mortuary, stripped the sheet off the dead body which was as cold as ice (in taking off the sheet Vassily touched his hand), took the bags, tied them together to make a rope, and carried

the rope to the lavatory. Then he attached it to the cross-beam, and climbed down along it. The rope did not reach the ground, but he did not know how much was wanting. Anyhow, he had to take the risk. He remained hanging in the air, and then jumped down. His legs were badly hurt, but he could still walk on. The basement had two windows; he could have climbed out of one of them but for the grating protecting them. He had to break the grating, but there was no tool to do it with. Vassily began to look around him, and chanced on a piece of plank with a sharp edge; armed with that weapon he tried to loosen the bricks which held the grating. He worked a long time at that task. The cock crowed for the second time, but the grating still held. At last he had loosened one side; and then he pushed the plank under the loosened end and pressed with all his force. The grating gave way completely, but at that moment one of the bricks fell down heavily. The noise could have been heard by the sentry. Vassily stood motionless. But silence reigned. He climbed out of the window. His way of escape was to climb the wall. An outhouse stood in the corner of the courtyard. He had to reach its roof, and pass thence to the top of the wall. But he would not be able to reach the roof without the help of the plank; so

he had to go back through the basement window to fetch it. A moment later he came out of the window with the plank in his hands; he stood still for a while listening to the steps of the sentry. His expectations were justified. The sentry was walking up and down on the other side of the courtyard. Vassily came up to the outhouse, leaned the plank against it, and began climbing. The plank slipped and fell on the ground. Vassily had his stockings on; he took them off so that he could cling with his bare feet in coming down. Then he leaned the plank again against the house, and seized the water-pipe with his hands. If only this time the plank would hold! A quick movement up the water-pipe, and his knee rested on the roof. The sentry was approaching. Vassily lay motionless. The sentry did not notice him, and passed on. Vassily leaped to his feet; the iron roof cracked under him. Another step or two, and he would reach the wall. He could touch it with his hand now. He leaned forward with one hand, then with the other, stretched out his body as far as he could, and found himself on the wall. Only, not to break his legs in jumping down, Vassily turned round, remained hanging in the air by his hands, stretched himself out, loosened the grip of one hand, then the other. "Help me, God!" He was on the ground.

And the ground was soft. His legs were not hurt, and he ran at the top of his speed. In a suburb, Malania opened her door, and he crept under her warm coverlet, made of small pieces of different colours stitched together.

X

THE wife of Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, a tall and handsome woman, as quiet and sleek as a well-fed heifer, had seen from her window how her husband had been murdered and dragged away into the fields. The horror of such a sight to Natalia Ivanovna was so intense — how could it be otherwise? — that all her other feelings vanished. No sooner had the crowd disappeared from view behind the garden fence, and the voices had become still; no sooner had the bare-footed Malania, their servant, run in with her eyes starting out of her head, calling out in a voice more suited to the proclamation of glad tidings the news that Peter Nikolaevich had been murdered and thrown into the ravine, than Natalia Ivanovna felt that behind her first sensation of horror, there was another sensation; a feeling of joy at her deliverance from the tyrant, who through all the nineteen years of their married life had made her work without a moment's rest. Her joy

made her aghast; she did not confess it to herself, but hid it the more from those around. When his mutilated, yellow and hairy body was being washed and put into the coffin, she cried with horror, and wept and sobbed. When the coroner — a special coroner for serious cases — came and was taking her evidence, she noticed in the room, where the inquest was taking place, two peasants in irons, who had been charged as the principal culprits. One of them was an old man with a curly white beard, and a calm and severe countenance. The other was rather young, of a gipsy type, with bright eyes and curly dishevelled hair. She declared that they were the two men who had first seized hold of Peter Nikolaevich's hands. In spite of the gipsy-like peasant looking at her with his eyes glistening from under his moving eyebrows, and saying reproachfully: "A great sin, lady, it is. Remember your death hour!" — in spite of that, she did not feel at all sorry for them. On the contrary, she began to hate them during the inquest, and wished desperately to take revenge on her husband's murderers.

A month later, after the case, which was committed for trial by court-martial, had ended in eight men being sentenced to hard labour, and in two — the old man with the white beard, and the gipsy boy, as she called the other — being con-

demned to be hanged, Natalia felt vaguely uneasy. But unpleasant doubts soon pass away under the solemnity of a trial. Since such high authorities considered that this was the right thing to do, it must be right.

The execution was to take place in the village itself. One Sunday Malania came home from church in her new dress and her new boots, and announced to her mistress that the gallows were being erected, and that the hangman was expected from Moscow on Wednesday. She also announced that the families of the convicts were raging, and that their cries could be heard all over the village.

Natalia Ivanovna did not go out of her house; she did not wish to see the gallows and the people in the village; she only wanted what had to happen to be over quickly. She only considered her own feelings, and did not care for the convicts and their families.

On Tuesday the village constable called on Natalia Ivanovna. He was a friend, and she offered him vodka and preserved mushrooms of her own making. The constable, after eating a little, told her that the execution was not to take place the next day.

"Why?"

"A very strange thing has happened. There

is no hangman to be found. They had one in Moscow, my son told me, but he has been reading the Gospels a good deal and says: 'I will not commit a murder.' He had himself been sentenced to hard labour for having committed a murder, and now he objects to hang when the law orders him. He was threatened with flogging. 'You may flog me,' he said, 'but I won't do it.' "

Natalia Ivanovna grew red and hot at the thought which suddenly came into her head.

"Could not the death sentence be commuted now? "

"How so, since the judges have passed it? The Czar alone has the right of amnesty."

"But how would he know? "

"They have the right of appealing to him."

"But it is on my account they are to die," said that stupid woman, Natalia Ivanovna. "And I forgive them."

The constable laughed. "Well — send a petition to the Czar."

"May I do it? "

"Of course you may."

"But is it not too late? "

"Send it by telegram."

"To the Czar himself? "

"To the Czar, if you like."

The story of the hangman having refused to

do his duty, and preferring to take the flogging instead, suddenly changed the soul of Natalia Ivanovna. The pity and the horror she felt the moment she heard that the peasants were sentenced to death, could not be stifled now, but filled her whole soul.

"Filip Vassilievich, my friend. Write that telegram for me. I want to appeal to the Czar to pardon them."

The constable shook his head. "I wonder whether that would not involve us in trouble?"

"I do it upon my own responsibility. I will not mention your name."

"Is not she a kind woman," thought the constable. "Very kind-hearted, to be sure. If my wife had such a heart, our life would be a paradise, instead of what it is now." And he wrote the telegram, —

"To his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor. "Your Majesty's loyal subject, the widow of Peter Nikolaevich Sventizky, murdered by the peasants, throws herself at the sacred feet (this sentence, when he wrote it down, pleased the constable himself most of all) of your Imperial Majesty, and implores you to grant an amnesty to the peasants so and so, from such a province, district, and village, who have been sentenced to death."

The telegram was sent by the constable himself, and Natalia Ivanovna felt relieved and happy. She had a feeling that since she, the widow of the murdered man, had forgiven the murderers, and was applying for an amnesty, the Czar could not possibly refuse it.

XI

LISA EROPKIN lived in a state of continual excitement. The longer she lived a true Christian life as it had been revealed to her, the more convinced she became that it was the right way, and her heart was full of joy.

She had two immediate aims before her. The one was to convert Mahin; or, as she put it to herself, to arouse his true nature, which was good and kind. She loved him, and the light of her love revealed the divine element in his soul which is at the bottom of all souls. But, further, she saw in him an exceptionally kind and tender heart, as well as a noble mind. Her other aim was to abandon her riches. She had first thought of giving away what she possessed in order to test Mahin; but afterwards she wanted to do so for her own sake, for the sake of her own soul. She began by simply giving money to any one who wanted it. But her father stopped that; besides

which, she felt disgusted at the crowd of supplicants who personally, and by letters, besieged her with demands for money. Then she resolved to apply to an old man, known to be a saint by his life, and to give him her money to dispose of in the way he thought best. Her father got angry with her when he heard about it. During a violent altercation he called her mad, a raving lunatic, and said he would take measures to prevent her from doing injury to herself.

Her father's irritation proved contagious. Losing all control over herself, and sobbing with rage, she behaved with the greatest impertinence to her father, calling him a tyrant and a miser.

Then she asked his forgiveness. He said he did not mind what she said; but she saw plainly that he was offended, and in his heart did not forgive her. She did not feel inclined to tell Mahin about her quarrel with her father; as to her sister, she was very cold to Lisa, being jealous of Mahin's love for her.

"I ought to confess to God," she said to herself. As all this happened in Lent, she made up her mind to fast in preparation for the communion, and to reveal all her thoughts to the father confessor, asking his advice as to what she ought to decide for the future.

At a small distance from her town a monastery

was situated, where an old monk lived who had gained a great reputation by his holy life, by his sermons and prophecies, as well as by the marvellous cures ascribed to him.

The monk had received a letter from Lisa's father announcing the visit of his daughter, and telling him in what a state of excitement the young girl was. He also expressed the hope in that letter that the monk would influence her in the right way, urging her not to depart from the golden mean, and to live like a good Christian without trying to upset the present conditions of her life.

The monk received Lisa after he had seen many other people, and being very tired, began by quietly recommending her to be modest and to submit to her present conditions of life and to her parents. Lisa listened silently, blushing and flushed with excitement. When he had finished admonishing her, she began saying with tears in her eyes, timidly at first, that Christ bade us leave father and mother to follow Him. Getting more and more excited, she told him her conception of Christ. The monk smiled slightly, and replied as he generally did when admonishing his penitents; but after a while he remained silent, repeating with heavy sighs, "O God!" Then he said, "Well, come to confession to-

morrow," and blessed her with his wrinkled hands.

The next day Lisa came to confession, and without renewing their interrupted conversation, he absolved her and refused to dispose of her fortune, giving no reasons for doing so.

Lisa's purity, her devotion to God and her ardent soul, impressed the monk deeply. He had desired long ago to renounce the world entirely; but the brotherhood, which drew a large income from his work as a preacher, insisted on his continuing his activity. He gave way, although he had a vague feeling that he was in a false position. It was rumoured that he was a miracle-working saint, whereas in reality he was a weak man, proud of his success in the world. When the soul of Lisa was revealed to him, he saw clearly into his own soul. He discovered how different he was to what he wanted to be, and realised the desire of his heart.

Soon after Lisa's visit he went to live in a separate cell as a hermit, and for three weeks did not officiate again in the church of the friary. After the celebration of the mass, he preached a sermon denouncing his own sins and those of the world, and urging all to repent.

From that day he preached every fortnight, and his sermons attracted increasing audiences.

His fame as a preacher spread abroad. His sermons were extraordinarily fearless and sincere, and deeply impressed all who listened to him.

XII

VASSILY was actually carrying out the object he had in leaving the prison. With the help of a few friends he broke into the house of the rich merchant Krasnopuzov, whom he knew to be a miser and a debauchee. Vassily took out of his writing-desk thirty thousand roubles, and began disposing of them as he thought right. He even gave up drink, so as not to spend that money on himself, but to distribute it to the poor; helping poor girls to get married; paying off people's debts, and doing this all without ever revealing himself to those he helped; his only desire was to distribute his money in the right way. As he also gave bribes to the police, he was left in peace for a long time.

His heart was singing for joy. When at last he was arrested and put to trial, he confessed with pride that he had robbed the fat merchant. "The money," he said, "was lying idle in that fool's desk, and he did not even know how much he had, whereas I have put it into circulation and helped a lot of good people."

The counsel for the defence spoke with such

good humour and kindness that the jury felt inclined to discharge Vassily, but sentenced him nevertheless to confinement in prison. He thanked the jury, and assured them that he would find his way out of prison before long.

XIII

NATALIA IVANOVNA SVENTIZKY's telegram proved useless. The committee appointed to deal with the petitions in the Emperor's name, decided not even to make a report to the Czar. But one day when the Sventizky case was discussed at the Emperor's luncheon-table, the chairman of the committee, who was present, mentioned the telegram which had been received from Sventizky's widow.

"*C'est très gentil de sa part,*" said one of the ladies of the imperial family.

The Emperor sighed, shrugged his shoulders, adorned with epaulettes. "The law," he said; and raised his glass for the groom of the chamber to pour out some Moselle.

All those present pretended to admire the wisdom of the sovereign's words. There was no further question about the telegram. The two peasants, the old man and the young boy, were

hanged by a Tartar hangman from Kazan, a cruel convict and a murderer.

The old man's wife wanted to dress the body of her husband in a white shirt, with white bands which serve as stockings, and new boots, but she was not allowed to do so. The two men were buried together in the same pit outside the churchyard wall.

"Princess Sofia Vladimirovna tells me he is a very remarkable preacher," remarked the old Empress, the Emperor's mother, one day to her son: "*Faites le venir. Il peut prêcher à la cathédrale.*"

"No, it would be better in the palace church," said the Emperor, and ordered the hermit Isidor to be invited.

All the generals, and other high officials, assembled in the church of the imperial palace; it was an event to hear the famous preacher.

A thin and grey old man appeared, looked at those present, and said: "In the name of God, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and began to speak.

At first all went well, but the longer he spoke the worse it became. "*Il devient de plus en plus agressif,*" as the Empress put it afterwards. He fulminated against every one. He spoke about the executions and charged the government with having made so many necessary. How can

the government of a Christian country kill men?

Everybody looked at everybody else, thinking of the bad taste of the sermon, and how unpleasant it must be for the Emperor to listen to it; but nobody expressed these thoughts aloud.

When Isidor had said Amen, the metropolitan approached, and asked him to call on him.

After Isidor had had a talk with the metropolitan and with the attorney-general, he was immediately sent away to a friary, not his own, but one at Suzdal, which had a prison attached to it; the prior of that friary was now Father Missael.

XIV

EVERY one tried to look as if Isidor's sermon contained nothing unpleasant, and nobody mentioned it. It seemed to the Czar that the hermit's words had not made any impression on himself; but once or twice during that day he caught himself thinking of the two peasants who had been hanged, and the widow of Sventizky who had asked an amnesty for them. That day the Emperor had to be present at a parade; after which he went out for a drive; a reception of ministers came next, then dinner, after dinner the theatre. As usual, the Czar fell asleep the moment his head touched the pillow. In the night an awful dream

awoke him: he saw gallows in a large field and corpses dangling on them; the tongues of the corpses were protruding, and their bodies moved and shook. And somebody shouted, "It is you — you who have done it." The Czar woke up bathed in perspiration and began to think. It was the first time that he had ever thought of the responsibilities which weighed on him, and the words of old Isidor came back to his mind. . . .

But only dimly could he see himself as a mere human being, and he could not consider his mere human wants and duties, because of all that was required of him as Czar. As to acknowledging that human duties were more obligatory than those of a Czar — he had not strength for that.

XV

HAVING served his second term in the prison, Prokofy, who had formerly worked on the Sventizky estate, was no longer the brisk, ambitious, smartly dressed fellow he had been. He seemed, on the contrary, a complete wreck. When sober he would sit idle and would refuse to do any work, however much his father scolded him; moreover, he was continually seeking to get hold of something secretly, and take it to the public-house for

a drink. When he came home he would continue to sit idle, coughing and spitting all the time. The doctor on whom he called, examined his chest and shook his head.

"You, my man, ought to have many things which you have not got."

"That is usually the case, isn't it?"

"Take plenty of milk, and don't smoke."

"These are days of fasting, and besides we have no cow."

Once in spring he could not get any sleep; he was longing to have a drink. There was nothing in the house he could lay his hand on to take to the public-house. He put on his cap and went out. He walked along the street up to the house where the priest and the deacon lived together. The deacon's harrow stood outside leaning against the hedge. Prokofy approached, took the harrow upon his shoulder, and walked to an inn kept by a woman, Petrovna. She might give him a small bottle of vodka for it. But he had hardly gone a few steps when the deacon came out of his house. It was already dawn, and he saw that Prokofy was carrying away his harrow.

"Hey, what's that?" cried the deacon.

The neighbours rushed out from their houses. Prokofy was seized, brought to the police station,

and then sentenced to eleven months' imprisonment. It was autumn, and Prokofy had to be transferred to the prison hospital. He was coughing badly; his chest was heaving from the exertion; and he could not get warm. Those who were stronger contrived not to shiver; Prokofy on the contrary shivered day and night, as the superintendent would not light the fires in the hospital till November, to save expense.

Prokofy suffered greatly in body, and still more in soul. He was disgusted with his surroundings, and hated every one — the deacon, the superintendent who would not light the fires, the guard, and the man who was lying in the bed next to his, and who had a swollen red lip. He began also to hate the new convict who was brought into hospital. This convict was Stepan. He was suffering from some disease on his head, and was transferred to the hospital and put in a bed at Prokofy's side. After a time that hatred to Stepan changed, and Prokofy became, on the contrary, extremely fond of him; he delighted in talking to him. It was only after a talk with Stepan that his anguish would cease for a while. Stepan always told every one he met about his last murder, and how it had impressed him.

“Far from shrieking, or anything of that

kind," he said to Prokofy, "she did not move. 'Kill me! There I am,' she said. 'But it is not my soul you destroy, it is your own.'"

"Well, of course, it is very dreadful to kill. I had one day to slaughter a sheep, and even that made me half mad. I have not destroyed any living soul; why then do those villains kill me? I have done no harm to anybody . . ."

"That will be taken into consideration."

"By whom?"

"By God, to be sure."

"I have not seen anything yet showing that God exists, and I don't believe in Him, brother. I think when a man dies, grass will grow over the spot, and that is the end of it."

"You are wrong to think like that. I have murdered so many people, whereas she, poor soul, was helping everybody. And you think she and I are to have the same lot? Oh no! Only wait."

"Then you believe the soul lives on after a man is dead?"

"To be sure; it truly lives."

Prokofy suffered greatly when death drew near. He could hardly breathe. But in the very last hour he felt suddenly relieved from all pain. He called Stepan to him. "Farewell, brother," he said. "Death has come, I see. I was so

afraid of it before. And now I don't mind. I only wish it to come quicker."

XVI

IN the meanwhile, the affairs of Eugene Mihailovich had grown worse and worse. Business was very slack. There was a new shop in the town; he was losing his customers, and the interest had to be paid. He borrowed again on interest. At last his shop and his goods were to be sold up. Eugene Mihailovich and his wife applied to every one they knew, but they could not raise the four hundred roubles they needed to save the shop anywhere.

They had some hope of the merchant Krasnopuzov, Eugene Mihailovich's wife being on good terms with his mistress. But news came that Krasnopuzov had been robbed of a huge sum of money. Some said of half a million roubles. "And do you know who is said to be the thief?" said Eugene Mihailovich to his wife. "Vassily, our former yard-porter. They say he is squandering the money, and the police are bribed by him."

"I knew he was a villain. You remember how he did not mind perjuring himself? But I did not expect it would go so far."

"I hear he has recently been in the courtyard of our house. Cook says she is sure it was he. She told me he helps poor girls to get married."

"They always invent tales. I don't believe it."

At that moment a strange man, shabbily dressed, entered the shop.

"What is it you want?"

"Here is a letter for you."

"From whom?"

"You will see yourself."

"Don't you require an answer? Wait a moment."

"I cannot." The strange man handed the letter and disappeared.

"How extraordinary!" said Eugene Mihailovich, and tore open the envelope. To his great amazement several hundred rouble notes fell out. "Four hundred roubles!" he exclaimed, hardly believing his eyes. "What does it mean?"

The envelope also contained a badly-spelt letter, addressed to Eugene Mihailovich. "It is said in the Gospels," ran the letter, "do good for evil. You have done me much harm; and in the coupon case you made me wrong the peasants greatly. But I have pity for you. Here are four hundred notes. Take them, and remember your porter Vassily."

"Very extraordinary!" said Eugene Mihailovich to his wife and to himself. And each time he remembered that incident, or spoke about it to his wife, tears would come to his eyes.

XVII

FOURTEEN priests were kept in the Suzdal friary prison, chiefly for having been untrue to the orthodox faith. Isidor had been sent to that place also. Father Missael received him according to the instructions he had been given, and without talking to him ordered him to be put into a separate cell as a serious criminal. After a fortnight Father Missael, making a round of the prison, entered Isidor's cell, and asked him whether there was anything he wished for.

"There is a great deal I wish for," answered Isidor; "but I cannot tell you what it is in the presence of anybody else. Let me talk to you privately."

They looked at each other, and Missael saw he had nothing to be afraid of in remaining alone with Isidor. He ordered Isidor to be brought into his own room, and when they were alone, he said,—

"Well, now you can speak."

Isidor fell on his knees.

"Brother," said Isidor. "What are you doing to yourself! Have mercy on your own soul. You are the worst villain in the world. You have offended against all that is sacred . . ."

A month after Missael sent a report, asking that Isidor should be released as he had repented, and he also asked for the release of the rest of the prisoners. After which he resigned his post.

XVIII

TEN years passed. Mitia Smokovnikov had finished his studies in the Technical College; he was now an engineer in the gold mines in Siberia, and was very highly paid. One day he was about to make a round in the district. The governor offered him a convict, Stepan Pelageushkine, to accompany him on his journey.

"A convict, you say? But is not that dangerous?"

"Not if it is this one. He is a holy man. You may ask anybody, they will all tell you so."

"Why has he been sent here?"

The governor smiled. "He had committed six murders, and yet he is a holy man. I go bail for him."

Mitia Smokovnikov took Stepan, now a bald-

headed, lean, tanned man, with him on his journey. On their way Stepan took care of Smokovnikov like his own child, and told him his story; told him why he had been sent here, and what now filled his life.

And, strange to say, Mitia Smokovnikov, who up to that time used to spend his time drinking, eating, and gambling, began for the first time to meditate on life. These thoughts never left him now, and produced a complete change in his habits. After a time he was offered a very advantageous position. He refused it, and made up his mind to buy an estate with the money he had, to marry, and to devote himself to the peasantry, helping them as much as he could.

XIX

HE carried out his intentions. But before retiring to his estate he called on his father, with whom he had been on bad terms, and who had settled apart with his new family. Mitia Smokovnikov wanted to make it up. The old man wondered at first, and laughed at the change he noticed in his son; but after a while he ceased to find fault with him, and thought of the many times when it was he who was the guilty one.

AFTER THE DANCE

AFTER THE DANCE

“— AND you say that a man cannot, of himself, understand what is good and evil; that it is all environment, that the environment swamps the man. But I believe it is all chance. Take my own case”

Thus spoke our excellent friend, Ivan Vasilievich, after a conversation between us on the impossibility of improving individual character without a change of the conditions under which men live. Nobody had actually said that one could not of oneself understand good and evil; but it was a habit of Ivan Vasilievich to answer in this way the thoughts aroused in his own mind by conversation, and to illustrate those thoughts by relating incidents in his own life. He often quite forgot the reason for his story in telling it; but he always told it with great sincerity and feeling.

He did so now.

“Take my own case. My whole life was moulded, not by environment, but by something quite different.”

“By what, then?” we asked.

“Oh, that is a long story. I should have to

tell you about a great many things to make you understand."

"Well, tell us then."

Ivan Vasilievich thought a little, and shook his head.

"My whole life," he said, "was changed in one night, or, rather, morning."

"Why, what happened?" one of us asked.

"What happened was that I was very much in love. I have been in love many times, but this was the most serious of all. It is a thing of the past; she has married daughters now. It was Varinka B——." Ivan Vasilievich mentioned her surname. "Even at fifty she is remarkably handsome; but in her youth, at eighteen, she was exquisite — tall, slender, graceful, and stately. Yes, stately is the word; she held herself very erect, by instinct as it were; and carried her head high, and that together with her beauty and height gave her a queenly air in spite of being thin, even bony one might say. It might indeed have been deterring had it not been for her smile, which was always gay and cordial, and for the charming light in her eyes and for her youthful sweetness."

"What an entrancing description you give, Ivan Vasilievich!"

"Description, indeed! I could not possibly describe her so that you could appreciate her. But

that does not matter; what I am going to tell you happened in the forties. I was at that time a student in a provincial university. I don't know whether it was a good thing or no, but we had no political clubs, no theories in our universities then. We were simply young and spent our time as young men do, studying and amusing ourselves. I was a very gay, lively, careless fellow, and had plenty of money too. I had a fine horse, and used to go tobogganing with the young ladies. Skating had not yet come into fashion. I went to drinking parties with my comrades—in those days we drank nothing but champagne—if we had no champagne we drank nothing at all. We never drank vodka, as they do now. Evening parties and balls were my favourite amusements. I danced well, and was not an ugly fellow."

"Come, there is no need to be modest," interrupted a lady near him. "We have seen your photograph. Not ugly, indeed! You were a handsome fellow."

"Handsome, if you like. That does not matter. When my love for her was at its strongest, on the last day of the carnival, I was at a ball at the provincial marshal's, a good-natured old man, rich and hospitable, and a court chamberlain. The guests were welcomed by his wife, who was as good-natured as himself. She was dressed in

puce-coloured velvet, and had a diamond diadem on her forehead, and her plump, old white shoulders and bosom were bare like the portraits of Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great.

“It was a delightful ball. It was a splendid room, with a gallery for the orchestra, which was famous at the time, and consisted of serfs belonging to a musical landowner. The refreshments were magnificent, and the champagne flowed in rivers. Though I was fond of champagne I did not drink that night, because without it I was drunk with love. But I made up for it by dancing waltzes and polkas till I was ready to drop — of course, whenever possible, with Varinka. She wore a white dress with a pink sash, white shoes, and white kid gloves, which did not quite reach to her thin pointed elbows. A disgusting engineer named Anisimov robbed me of the mazurka with her — to this day I cannot forgive him. He asked her for the dance the minute she arrived, while I had driven to the hair-dresser’s to get a pair of gloves, and was late. So I did not dance the mazurka with her, but with a German girl to whom I had previously paid a little attention; but I am afraid I did not behave very politely to her that evening. I hardly spoke or looked at her, and saw nothing but the tall, slender figure in a white dress,

with a pink sash, a flushed, beaming, dimpled face, and sweet, kind eyes. I was not alone; they were all looking at her with admiration, the men and women alike, although she outshone all of them. They could not help admiring her.

"Although I was not nominally her partner for the mazurka, I did as a matter of fact dance nearly the whole time with her. She always came forward boldly the whole length of the room to pick me out. I flew to meet her without waiting to be chosen, and she thanked me with a smile for my intuition. When I was brought up to her with somebody else, and she guessed wrongly, she took the other man's hand with a shrug of her slim shoulders, and smiled at me regretfully.

"Whenever there was a waltz figure in the mazurka, I waltzed with her for a long time, and breathing fast and smiling, she would say, '*Encore*'; and I went on waltzing and waltzing, as though unconscious of any bodily existence."

"Come now, how could you be unconscious of it with your arm round her waist? You must have been conscious, not only of your own existence, but of hers," said one of the party.

Ivan Vasilievich cried out, almost shouting in anger: "There you are, moderns all over! Nowadays you think of nothing but the body. It was different in our day. The more I was in love the

less corporeal was she in my eyes. Nowadays you think of nothing but the body. It was different in our day. The more I was in love the less corporeal was she in my eyes. Nowadays you see legs, ankles, and I don't know what. You undress the women you are in love with. In my eyes, as Alphonse Karr said — and he was a good writer — ‘the one I loved was always draped in robes of bronze.’ We never thought of doing so; we tried to veil her nakedness, like Noah's good-natured son. Oh, well, you can't understand.”

“Don't pay any attention to him. Go on,” said one of them.

“Well, I danced for the most part with her, and did not notice how time was passing. The musicians kept playing the same mazurka tunes over and over again in desperate exhaustion — you know what it is towards the end of a ball. Papas and mammas were already getting up from the card-tables in the drawing-room in expectation of supper, the men-servants were running to and fro bringing in things. It was nearly three o'clock. I had to make the most of the last minutes. I chose her again for the mazurka, and for the hundredth time we danced across the room.

“‘The quadrille after supper is mine,’ I said, taking her to her place.

“ ‘Of course, if I am not carried off home,’ she said, with a smile.

“ ‘I won’t give you up,’ I said.

“ ‘Give me my fan, anyhow,’ she answered.

“ ‘I am so sorry to part with it,’ I said, handing her a cheap white fan.

“ ‘Well, here’s something to console you,’ she said, plucking a feather out of the fan, and giving it to me.

“ ‘I took the feather, and could only express my rapture and gratitude with my eyes. I was not only pleased and gay, I was happy, delighted; I was good, I was not myself but some being not of this earth, knowing nothing of evil. I hid the feather in my glove, and stood there unable to tear myself away from her.

“ ‘Look, they are urging father to dance,’ she said to me, pointing to the tall, stately figure of her father, a colonel with silver epaulettes, who was standing in the doorway with some ladies.

“ ‘Varinka, come here!’ exclaimed our hostess, the lady with the diamond *ferronnière* and with shoulders like Elizabeth, in a loud voice.

“ ‘Varinka went to the door, and I followed her.

“ ‘Persuade your father to dance the mazurka with you, *ma chère*.—Do, please, Peter Valdislavovich,’ she said, turning to the colonel.

“ ‘Varinka’s father was a very handsome, well-

preserved old man. He had a good colour, moustaches curled in the style of Nicolas I., and white whiskers which met the moustaches. His hair was combed on to his forehead, and a bright smile, like his daughter's, was on his lips and in his eyes. He was splendidly set up, with a broad military chest, on which he wore some decorations, and he had powerful shoulders and long slim legs. He was that ultra-military type produced by the discipline of Emperor Nicolas I.

"When we approached the door the colonel was just refusing to dance, saying that he had quite forgotten how; but at that instant he smiled, swung his arm gracefully around to the left, drew his sword from its sheath, handed it to an obliging young man who stood near, and smoothed his suède glove on his right hand.

"'Everything must be done according to rule,' he said with a smile. He took the hand of his daughter, and stood one-quarter turned, waiting for the music.

"At the first sound of the mazurka, he stamped one foot smartly, threw the other forward, and, at first slowly and smoothly, then buoyantly and impetuously, with stamping of feet and clicking of boots, his tall, imposing figure moved the length of the room. Varinka swayed gracefully beside him, rhythmically and easily, making her steps

short or long, with her little feet in their white satin slippers.

"All the people in the room followed every movement of the couple. As for me I not only admired, I regarded them with enraptured sympathy. I was particularly impressed with the old gentleman's boots. They were not the modern pointed affairs, but were made of cheap leather, squared-toed, and evidently built by the regimental cobbler. In order that his daughter might dress and go out in society, he did not buy fashionable boots, but wore home-made ones, I thought, and his square toes seemed to me most touching. It was obvious that in his time he had been a good dancer; but now he was too heavy, and his legs had not spring enough for all the beautiful steps he tried to take. Still, he contrived to go twice round the room. When at the end, standing with legs apart, he suddenly clicked his feet together and fell on one knee, a bit heavily, and she danced gracefully around him, smiling and adjusting her skirt, the whole room applauded.

"Rising with an effort, he tenderly took his daughter's face between his hands. He kissed her on the forehead, and brought her to me, under the impression that I was her partner for the mazurka. I said I was not. 'Well, never mind. Just go around the room once with her,' he said, smil-

ing kindly, as he replaced his sword in the sheath.

“As the contents of a bottle flow readily when the first drop has been poured, so my love for Varinka seemed to set free the whole force of loving within me. In surrounding her it embraced the world. I loved the hostess with her diadem and her shoulders like Elizabeth, and her husband and her guests and her footmen, and even the engineer Anisimov who felt peevish towards me. As for Varinka’s father, with his home-made boots and his kind smile, so like her own, I felt a sort of tenderness for him that was almost rapture.

“After supper I danced the promised quadrille with her, and though I had been infinitely happy before, I grew still happier every moment.

“We did not speak of love. I neither asked myself nor her whether she loved me. It was quite enough to know that I loved her. And I had only one fear — that something might come to interfere with my great joy.

“When I went home, and began to undress for the night, I found it quite out of the question. I held the little feather out of her fan in my hand, and one of her gloves which she gave me when I helped her into the carriage after her mother. Looking at these things, and without closing my eyes I could see her before me as she was for an

instant when she had to choose between two partners. She tried to guess what kind of person was represented in me, and I could hear her sweet voice as she said, 'Pride — am I right?' and merrily gave me her hand. At supper she took the first sip from my glass of champagne, looking at me over the rim with her caressing glance. But, plainest of all, I could see her as she danced with her father, gliding along beside him, and looking at the admiring observers with pride and happiness.

"He and she were united in my mind in one rush of pathetic tenderness.

"I was living then with my brother, who has since died. He disliked going out, and never went to dances; and besides, he was busy preparing for his last university examinations, and was leading a very regular life. He was asleep. I looked at him, his head buried in the pillow and half covered with the quilt; and I affectionately pitied him — pitied him for his ignorance of the bliss I was experiencing. Our serf Petrusha had met me with a candle, ready to undress me, but I sent him away. His sleepy face and tousled hair seemed to me so touching. Trying not to make a noise, I went to my room on tiptoe and sat down on my bed. No, I was too happy; I could not sleep. Besides, it was too hot in the rooms. Without taking off my

uniform, I went quietly into the hall, put on my overcoat, opened the front door and stepped out into the street.

"It was after four when I had left the ball; going home and stopping there a while had occupied two hours, so by the time I went out it was dawn. It was regular carnival weather — foggy, and the road full of water-soaked snow just melting, and water dripping from the eaves. Varinka's family lived on the edge of town near a large field, one end of which was a parade ground: at the other end was a boarding-school for young ladies. I passed through our empty little street and came to the main thoroughfare, where I met pedestrians and sledges laden with wood, the runners grating the road. The horses swung with regular paces beneath their shining yokes, their backs covered with straw mats and their heads wet with rain; while the drivers, in enormous boots, splashed through the mud beside the sledges. All this, the very horses themselves, seemed to me stimulating and fascinating, full of suggestion.

"When I approached the field near their house, I saw at one end of it, in the direction of the parade ground, something very huge and black, and I heard sounds of fife and drum proceeding from it. My heart had been full of song, and I had heard in imagination the tune of the mazurka,

but this was very harsh music. It was not pleasant.

“ ‘What can that be?’ I thought, and went towards the sound by a slippery path through the centre of the field. Walking about a hundred paces, I began to distinguish many black objects through the mist. They were evidently soldiers. ‘It is probably a drill,’ I thought.

“ ‘So I went along in that direction in company with a blacksmith, who wore a dirty coat and an apron, and was carrying something. He walked ahead of me as we approached the place. The soldiers in black uniforms stood in two rows, facing each other motionless, their guns at rest. Behind them stood the fifes and drums, incessantly repeating the same unpleasant tune.

“ ‘What are they doing?’ I asked the blacksmith, who halted at my side.

“ ‘A Tartar is being beaten through the ranks for his attempt to desert,’ said the blacksmith in an angry tone, as he looked intently at the far end of the line.

“ ‘I looked in the same direction, and saw between the files something horrid approaching me. The thing that approached was a man, stripped to the waist, fastened with cords to the guns of two soldiers who were leading him. At his side an officer in overcoat and cap was walking, whose

figure had a familiar look. The victim advanced under the blows that rained upon him from both sides, his whole body plunging, his feet dragging through the snow. Now he threw himself backward, and the subalterns who led him thrust him forward. Now he fell forward, and they pulled him up short; while ever at his side marched the tall officer, with firm and nervous pace. It was Varinka's father, with his rosy face and white moustache.

"At each stroke the man, as if amazed, turned his face, grimacing with pain, towards the side whence the blow came, and showing his white teeth repeated the same words over and over. But I could only hear what the words were when he came quite near. He did not speak them, he sobbed them out,—

" ' Brothers, have mercy on me! Brothers, have mercy on me! ' But the brothers had no mercy, and when the procession came close to me, I saw how a soldier who stood opposite me took a firm step forward and lifting his stick with a whirr, brought it down upon the man's back. The man plunged forward, but the subalterns pulled him back, and another blow came down from the other side, then from this side and then from the other. The colonel marched beside him, and looking now at his feet and now at the man, inhaled the air,

puffed out his cheeks, and breathed it out between his protruded lips. When they passed the place where I stood, I caught a glimpse between the two files of the back of the man that was being punished. It was something so many-coloured, wet, red, unnatural, that I could hardly believe it was a human body.

“ ‘My God!’ muttered the blacksmith.

“The procession moved farther away. The blows continued to rain upon the writhing, falling creature; the fifes shrilled and the drums beat, and the tall imposing figure of the colonel moved alongside the man, just as before. Then, suddenly, the colonel stopped, and rapidly approached a man in the ranks.

“ ‘I’ll teach you to hit him gently,’ I heard his furious voice say. ‘Will you pat him like that? Will you?’ and I saw how his strong hand in the suède glove struck the weak, bloodless, terrified soldier for not bringing down his stick with sufficient strength on the red neck of the Tartar.

“ ‘Bring new sticks!’ he cried, and looking round, he saw me. Assuming an air of not knowing me, and with a ferocious, angry frown, he hastily turned away. I felt so utterly ashamed that I didn’t know where to look. It was as if I had been detected in a disgraceful act. I dropped my eyes, and quickly hurried home. All the way

I had the drums beating and the fifes whistling in my ears. And I heard the words, 'Brothers, have mercy on me!' or 'Will you pat him? Will you?' My heart was full of physical disgust that was almost sickness. So much so that I halted several times on my way, for I had the feeling that I was going to be really sick from all the horrors that possessed me at that sight. I do not remember how I got home and got to bed. But the moment I was about to fall asleep I heard and saw again all that had happened, and I sprang up.

" 'Evidently he knows something I do not know,' I thought about the colonel. 'If I knew what he knows I should certainly grasp — understand — what I have just seen, and it would not cause me such suffering.'

" But however much I thought about it, I could not understand the thing that the colonel knew. It was evening before I could get to sleep, and then only after calling on a friend and drinking till I was quite drunk.

" Do you think I had come to the conclusion that the deed I had witnessed was wicked? Oh, no. Since it was done with such assurance, and was recognised by every one as indispensable, they doubtless knew something which I did not know. So I thought, and tried to understand. But no matter, I could never understand it, then or afterwards.

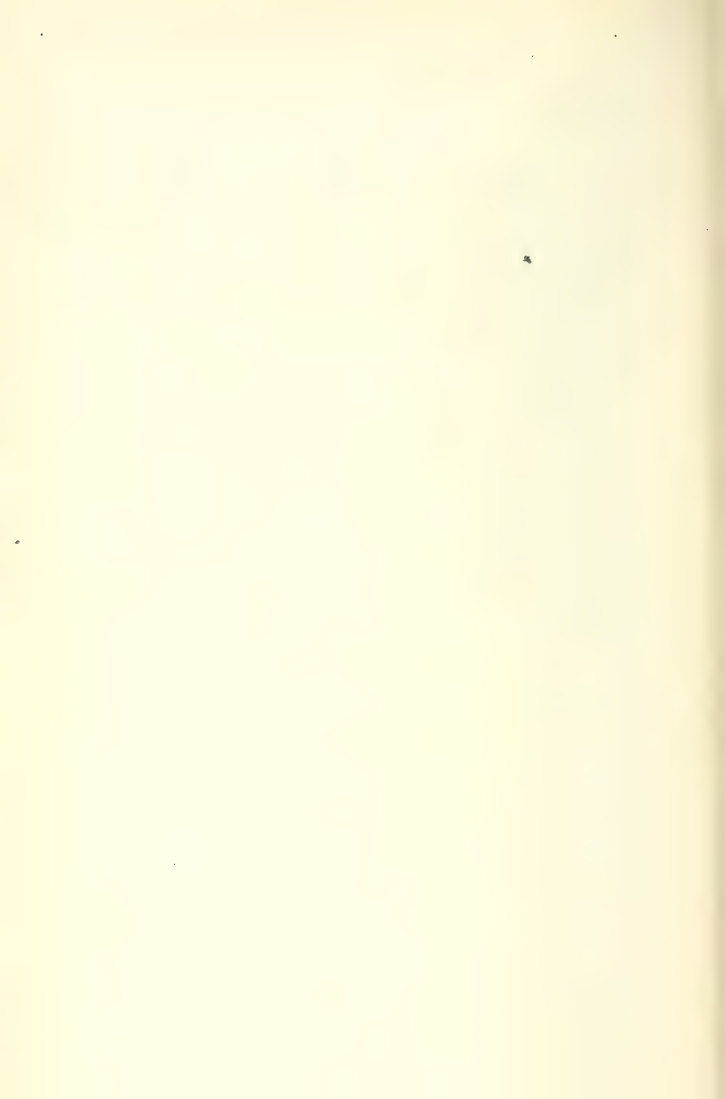
And not being able to grasp it, I could not enter the service as I had intended. I don't mean only the military service: I did not enter the Civil Service either. And so I have been of no use whatever, as you can see."

"Yes, we know how useless you've been," said one of us. "Tell us, rather, how many people would be of any use at all if it hadn't been for you."

"Oh, that's utter nonsense," said Ivan Vasilievich, with genuine annoyance.

"Well; and what about the love affair?"

"My love? It decreased from that day. When, as often happened, she looked dreamy and meditative, I instantly recollected the colonel on the parade ground, and I felt so awkward and uncomfortable that I began to see her less frequently. So my love came to naught. Yes; such chances arise, and they alter and direct a man's whole life," he said in summing up. "And you say . . ."



ALYOSHA THE POT

ALYOSHA THE POT

ALYOSHA was the younger brother. He was called the Pot, because his mother had once sent him with a pot of milk to the deacon's wife, and he had stumbled against something and broken it. His mother had beaten him, and the children had teased him. Since then he was nicknamed the Pot. Alyosha was a tiny, thin little fellow, with ears like wings, and a huge nose. "Alyosha has a nose that looks like a dog on a hill!" the children used to call after him. Alyosha went to the village school, but was not good at lessons; besides, there was so little time to learn. His elder brother was in town, working for a merchant, so Alyosha had to help his father from a very early age. When he was no more than six he used to go out with the girls to watch the cows and sheep in the pasture, and a little later he looked after the horses by day and by night. And at twelve years of age he had already begun to plough and to drive the cart. The skill was there though the strength was not. He was always cheerful. Whenever the children made fun of him, he would either laugh or be silent. When his father scolded him he would

stand mute and listen attentively, and as soon as the scolding was over would smile and go on with his work. Alyosha was nineteen when his brother was taken as a soldier. So his father placed him with the merchant as a yard-porter. He was given his brother's old boots, his father's old coat and cap, and was taken to town. Alyosha was delighted with his clothes, but the merchant was not impressed by his appearance.

"I thought you would bring me a man in Simeon's place," he said, scanning Alyosha; "and you've brought me *this*! What's the good of him?"

"He can do everything; look after horses and drive. He's a good one to work. He looks rather thin, but he's tough enough. And he's very willing."

"He looks it. All right; we'll see what we can do with him."

So Alyosha remained at the merchant's.

The family was not a large one. It consisted of the merchant's wife: her old mother: a married son poorly educated who was in his father's business: another son, a learned one who had finished school and entered the University, but having been expelled, was living at home: and a daughter who still went to school.

They did not take to Alyosha at first. He was

uncouth, badly dressed, and had no manner, but they soon got used to him. Alyosha worked even better than his brother had done; he was really very willing. They sent him on all sorts of errands, but he did everything quickly and readily, going from one task to another without stopping. And so here, just as at home, all the work was put upon his shoulders. The more he did, the more he was given to do. His mistress, her old mother, the son, the daughter, the clerk, and the cook — all ordered him about, and sent him from one place to another.

“Alyosha, do this! Alyosha, do that! What! have you forgotten, Alyosha? Mind you don’t forget, Alyosha!” was heard from morning till night. And Alyosha ran here, looked after this and that, forgot nothing, found time for everything, and was always cheerful.

His brother’s old boots were soon worn out, and his master scolded him for going about in tatters with his toes sticking out. He ordered another pair to be bought for him in the market. Alyosha was delighted with his new boots, but was angry with his feet when they ached at the end of the day after so much running about. And then he was afraid that his father would be annoyed when he came to town for his wages, to find that his master had deducted the cost of the boots.

In the winter Alyosha used to get up before day-break. He would chop the wood, sweep the yard, feed the cows and horses, light the stoves, clean the boots, prepare the samovars and polish them afterwards; or the clerk would get him to bring up the goods; or the cook would set him to knead the bread and clean the saucepans. Then he was sent to town on various errands, to bring the daughter home from school, or to get some olive oil for the old mother. "Why the devil have you been so long?" first one, then another, would say to him. Why should they go? Alyosha can go. "Alyosha! Alyosha!" And Alyosha ran here and there. He breakfasted in snatches while he was working, and rarely managed to get his dinner at the proper hour. The cook used to scold him for being late, but she was sorry for him all the same, and would keep something hot for his dinner and supper.

At holiday times there was more work than ever, but Alyosha liked holidays because everybody gave him a tip. Not much certainly, but it would amount up to about sixty kopeks [1s 2d] — his very own money. For Alyosha never set eyes on his wages. His father used to come and take them from the merchant, and only scold Alyosha for wearing out his boots.

When he had saved up two roubles [4s], by the

advice of the cook he bought himself a red knitted jacket, and was so happy when he put it on, that he couldn't close his mouth for joy. Alyosha was not talkative; when he spoke at all, he spoke abruptly, with his head turned away. When told to do anything, or asked if he could do it, he would say yes without the smallest hesitation, and set to work at once.

Alyosha did not know any prayer; and had forgotten what his mother had taught him. But he prayed just the same, every morning and every evening, prayed with his hands, crossing himself.

He lived like this for about a year and a half, and towards the end of the second year a most startling thing happened to him. He discovered one day, to his great surprise, that, in addition to the relation of usefulness existing between people, there was also another, a peculiar relation of quite a different character. Instead of a man being wanted to clean boots, and go on errands and harness horses, he is not wanted to be of any service at all, but another human being wants to serve him and pet him. Suddenly Alyosha felt he was such a man.

He made this discovery through the cook Ustina. She was young, had no parents, and worked as hard as Alyosha. He felt for the first time in his life that he — not his services, but he himself

— was necessary to another human being. When his mother used to be sorry for him, he had taken no notice of her. It had seemed to him quite natural, as though he were feeling sorry for himself. But here was Ustinia, a perfect stranger, and sorry for him. She would save him some hot porridge, and sit watching him, her chin propped on her bare arm, with the sleeve rolled up, while he was eating it. When he looked at her she would begin to laugh, and he would laugh too.

This was such a new, strange thing to him that it frightened Alyosha. He feared that it might interfere with his work. But he was pleased, nevertheless, and when he glanced at the trousers that Ustinia had mended for him, he would shake his head and smile. He would often think of her while at work, or when running on errands. "A fine girl, Ustinia!" he sometimes exclaimed.

Ustinia used to help him whenever she could, and he helped her. She told him all about her life; how she had lost her parents; how her aunt had taken her in and found a place for her in the town; how the merchant's son had tried to take liberties with her, and how she had rebuffed him. She liked to talk, and Alyosha liked to listen to her. He had heard that peasants who came up to work in the towns frequently got married to servant girls. On one occasion she asked him if his par-

ents intended marrying him soon. He said that he did not know; that he did not want to marry any of the village girls.

"Have you taken a fancy to some one, then?"

"I would marry you, if you'd be willing."

"Get along with you, Alyosha the Pot; but you've found your tongue, haven't you?" she exclaimed, slapping him on the back with a towel she held in her hand. "Why shouldn't I?"

At Shrovetide Alyosha's father came to town for his wages. It had come to the ears of the merchant's wife that Alyosha wanted to marry Ustinia, and she disapproved of it. "What will be the use of her with a baby?" she thought, and informed her husband.

The merchant gave the old man Alyosha's wages.

"How is my lad getting on?" he asked. "I told you he was willing."

"That's all right, as far as it goes, but he's taken some sort of nonsense into his head. He wants to marry our cook. Now I don't approve of married servants. We won't have them in the house."

"Well, now, who would have thought the fool would think of such a thing?" the old man exclaimed. "But don't you worry. I'll soon settle that."

He went into the kitchen, and sat down at the table waiting for his son. Alyosha was out on an errand, and came back breathless.

"I thought you had some sense in you; but what's this you've taken into your head?" his father began.

"I? Nothing."

"How, nothing? They tell me you want to get married. You shall get married when the time comes. I'll find you a decent wife, not some town hussy."

His father talked and talked, while Alyosha stood still and sighed. When his father had quite finished, Alyosha smiled.

"All right. I'll drop it."

"Now that's what I call sense."

When he was left alone with Ustinia he told her what his father had said. (She had listened at the door.)

"It's no good; it can't come off. Did you hear? He was angry — won't have it at any price."

Ustinia cried into her apron.

Alyosha shook his head.

"What's to be done? We must do as we're told."

"Well, are you going to give up that nonsense, as your father told you?" his mistress asked, as he was putting up the shutters in the evening.



Russian Peasant.

"To be sure we are," Alyosha replied with a smile, and then burst into tears.

From that day Alyosha went about his work as usual, and no longer talked to Ustinia about their getting married. One day in Lent the clerk told him to clear the snow from the roof. Alyosha climbed on to the roof and swept away all the snow; and, while he was still raking out some frozen lumps from the gutter, his foot slipped and he fell over. Unfortunately he did not fall on the snow, but on a piece of iron over the door. Ustinia came running up, together with the merchant's daughter.

"Have you hurt yourself, Alyosha?"

"Ah! no, it's nothing."

But he could not raise himself when he tried to, and began to smile.

He was taken into the lodge. The doctor arrived, examined him, and asked where he felt the pain.

"I feel it all over," he said. "But it doesn't matter. I'm only afraid master will be annoyed. Father ought to be told."

Alyosha lay in bed for two days, and on the third day they sent for the priest.

"Are you really going to die?" Ustinia asked.

"Of course I am. You can't go on living for

ever. You must go when the time comes." Alyosha spoke rapidly as usual. "Thank you, Ustina. You've been very good to me. What a lucky thing they didn't let us marry! Where should we have been now? It's much better as it is."

When the priest came, he prayed with his hands and with his heart. "As it is good here when you obey and do no harm to others, so it will be there," was the thought within it.

He spoke very little; he only said he was thirsty, and he seemed full of wonder at something.

He lay in wonderment, then stretched himself, and died.

MY DREAM

MY DREAM

"As a daughter she no longer exists for me. Can't you understand? She simply doesn't exist. Still, I cannot possibly leave her to the charity of strangers. I will arrange things so that she can live as she pleases, but I do not wish to hear of her. Who would ever have thought . . . the horror of it, the horror of it."

He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, and raised his eyes. These words were spoken by Prince Michael Ivanovich to his brother Peter, who was governor of a province in Central Russia. Prince Peter was a man of fifty, Michael's junior by ten years.

On discovering that his daughter, who had left his house a year before, had settled here with her child, the elder brother had come from St. Petersburg to the provincial town, where the above conversation took place.

Prince Michael Ivanovich was a tall, handsome, white-haired, fresh coloured man, proud and attractive in appearance and bearing. His family consisted of a vulgar, irritable wife, who wrangled with him continually over every petty detail,

a son, a ne'er-do-well, spendthrift and roué — yet a "gentleman," according to his father's code, two daughters, of whom the elder had married well, and was living in St. Petersburg; and the younger, Lisa — his favourite, who had disappeared from home a year before. Only a short while ago he had found her with her child in this provincial town.

Prince Peter wanted to ask his brother how, and under what circumstances, Lisa had left home, and who could possibly be the father of her child. But he could not make up his mind to inquire.

That very morning, when his wife had attempted to condole with her brother-in-law, Prince Peter had observed a look of pain on his brother's face. The look had at once been masked by an expression of unapproachable pride, and he had begun to question her about their flat, and the price she paid. At luncheon, before the family and guests, he had been witty and sarcastic as usual. Towards every one, excepting the children, whom he treated with almost reverent tenderness, he adopted an attitude of distant *hauteur*. And yet it was so natural to him that every one somehow acknowledged his right to be haughty.

In the evening his brother arranged a game of whist. When he retired to the room which had

been made ready for him, and was just beginning to take out his artificial teeth, some one tapped lightly on the door with two fingers.

"Who is that?"

"*C'est moi, Michael.*"

Prince Michael Ivanovich recognised the voice of his sister-in-law, frowned, replaced his teeth, and said to himself, "What does she want?" Aloud he said, "*Entrez.*"

His sister-in-law was a quiet, gentle creature, who bowed in submission to her husband's will. But to many she seemed a crank, and some did not hesitate to call her a fool. She was pretty, but her hair was always carelessly dressed, and she herself was untidy and absent-minded. She had, also, the strangest, most unaristocratic ideas, by no means fitting in the wife of a high official. These ideas she would express most unexpectedly, to everybody's astonishment, her husband's no less than her friends'.

"*Vous pouvez me renvoyer, mais je ne m'en irai pas, je vous le dis d'avance,*" she began, in her characteristic, indifferent way.

"*Dieu preserve,*" answered her brother-in-law, with his usual somewhat exaggerated politeness, and brought forward a chair for her.

"*Ça ne vous dérange pas?*" she asked, taking out a cigarette. "I'm not going to say anything

unpleasant, Michael. I only wanted to say something about Lisochka."

Michael Ivanovich sighed — the word pained him; but mastering himself at once, he answered with a tired smile. "Our conversation can only be on one subject, and that is the subject you wish to discuss." He spoke without looking at her, and avoided even naming the subject. But his plump, pretty little sister-in-law was unabashed. She continued to regard him with the same gentle, imploring look in her blue eyes, sighing even more deeply.

"Michael, *mon bon ami*, have pity on her. She is only human."

"I never doubted that," said Michael Ivanovich with a bitter smile.

"She is your daughter."

"She was — but my dear Aline, why talk about this?"

"Michael, dear, won't you see her? I only wanted to say, that the one who is to blame —"

Prince Michael Ivanovich flushed; his face became cruel.

"For heaven's sake, let us stop. I have suffered enough. I have now but one desire, and that is to put her in such a position that she will be independent of others, and that she shall have no further need of communicating with me. Then

she can live her own life, and my family and I need know nothing more about her. That is all I can do."

"Michael, you say nothing but 'I'! She, too, is 'I.'"

"No doubt; but, dear Aline, please let us drop the matter. I feel it too deeply."

Alexandra Dmitrievna remained silent for a few moments, shaking her head. "And Masha, your wife, thinks as you do?"

"Yes, quite."

Alexandra Dmitrievna made an inarticulate sound.

"*Brisons la dessus et bonne nuit*," said he. But she did not go. She stood silent a moment. Then, —

"Peter tells me you intend to leave the money with the woman where she lives. Have you the address?"

"I have."

"Don't leave it with the woman, Michael! Go yourself. Just see how she lives. If you don't want to see her, you need not. *He* isn't there; there is no one there."

Michael Ivanovich shuddered violently.

"Why do you torture me so? It's a sin against hospitality!"

Alexandra Dmitrievna rose, and almost in

tears, being touched by her own pleading, said, "She is so miserable, but she is such a dear."

He got up, and stood waiting for her to finish. She held out her hand.

"Michael, you do wrong," said she, and left him.

For a long while after she had gone Michael Ivanovich walked to and fro on the square of carpet. He frowned and shivered, and exclaimed, "Oh, oh!" And then the sound of his own voice frightened him, and he was silent.

His wounded pride tortured him. His daughter — his — brought up in the house of her mother, the famous Avdotia Borisovna, whom the Empress honoured with her visits, and acquaintance with whom was an honour for all the world! His daughter —; and he had lived his life as a knight of old, knowing neither fear nor blame. The fact that he had a natural son born of a Frenchwoman, whom he had settled abroad, did not lower his own self-esteem. And now this daughter, for whom he had not only done everything that a father could and should do; this daughter to whom he had given a splendid education and every opportunity to make a match in the best Russian society — this daughter to whom he had not only given all that a girl could desire, but whom he had really *loved*; whom he had admired,

been proud of — this daughter had repaid him with such disgrace, that he was ashamed and could not face the eyes of men!

He recalled the time when she was not merely his child, and a member of his family, but his darling, his joy and his pride. He saw her again, a little thing of eight or nine, bright, intelligent, lively, impetuous, graceful, with brilliant black eyes and flowing auburn hair. He remembered how she used to jump up on his knees and hug him, and tickle his neck; and how she would laugh, regardless of his protests, and continue to tickle him, and kiss his lips, his eyes, and his cheeks. He was naturally opposed to all demonstration, but this impetuous love moved him, and he often submitted to her petting. He remembered also how sweet it was to caress her. To remember all this, when that sweet child had become what she now was, a creature of whom he could not think without loathing.

He also recalled the time when she was growing into womanhood, and the curious feeling of fear and anger that he experienced when he became aware that men regarded her as a woman. He thought of his jealous love when she came coquettishly to him dressed for a ball, and knowing that she was pretty. He dreaded the passionate glances which fell upon her, that she not only did

not understand but rejoiced in. "Yes," thought he, "that superstition of woman's purity! Quite the contrary, they do not know shame — they lack this sense." He remembered how, quite inexplicably to him, she had refused two very good suitors. She had become more and more fascinated by her own success in the round of gaieties she lived in.

But this success could not last long. A year passed, then two, then three. She was a familiar figure, beautiful — but her first youth had passed, and she had become somehow part of the ball-room furniture. Michael Ivanovich remembered how he had realised that she was on the road to spinsterhood, and desired but one thing for her. He must get her married off as quickly as possible, perhaps not quite so well as might have been arranged earlier, but still a respectable match.

But it seemed to him she had behaved with a pride that bordered on insolence. Remembering this, his anger rose more and more fiercely against her. To think of her refusing so many decent men, only to end in this disgrace. "Oh, oh!" he groaned again.

Then stopping, he lit a cigarette, and tried to think of other things. He would send her money, without ever letting her see him. But memories came again. He remembered — it was not so

very long ago, for she was more than twenty then — her beginning a flirtation with a boy of fourteen, a cadet of the Corps of Pages who had been staying with them in the country. She had driven the boy half crazy; he had wept in his distraction. Then how she had rebuked her father severely, coldly, and even rudely, when, to put an end to this stupid affair, he had sent the boy away. She seemed somehow to consider herself insulted. Since then father and daughter had drifted into undisguised hostility.

“I was right,” he said to himself. “She is a wicked and shameless woman.”

And then, as a last ghastly memory, there was the letter from Moscow, in which she wrote that she could not return home; that she was a miserable, abandoned woman, asking only to be forgiven and forgotten. Then the horrid recollection of the scene with his wife came to him; their surmises and their suspicions, which became a certainty. The calamity had happened in Finland, where they had let her visit her aunt; and the culprit was an insignificant Swede, a student, an empty-headed, worthless creature — and married.

All this came back to him now as he paced backwards and forwards on the bedroom carpet, recollecting his former love for her, his pride in her. He recoiled with terror before the incom-

prehensible fact of her downfall, and he hated her for the agony she was causing him. He remembered the conversation with his sister-in-law, and tried to imagine how he might forgive her. But as soon as the thought of "him" arose, there surged up in his heart horror, disgust, and wounded pride. He groaned aloud, and tried to think of something else.

"No, it is impossible; I will hand over the money to Peter to give her monthly. And as for me, I have no longer a daughter."

And again a curious feeling overpowered him: a mixture of self-pity at the recollection of his love for her, and of fury against her for causing him this anguish.

II

DURING the last year Lisa had without doubt lived through more than in all the preceding twenty-five. Suddenly she had realised the emptiness of her whole life. It rose before her, base and sordid — this life at home and among the rich set in St. Petersburg — this animal existence that never sounded the depths, but only touched the shallows of life.

It was well enough for a year or two, or perhaps even three. But when it went on for seven

or eight years, with its parties, balls, concerts, and suppers; with its costumes and coiffures to display the charms of the body; with its adorers old and young, all alike seemingly possessed of some unaccountable right to have everything, to laugh at everything; and with its summer months spent in the same way, everything yielding but a superficial pleasure, even music and reading merely touching upon life's problems, but never solving them — all this holding out no promise of change, and losing its charm more and more — she began to despair. She had desperate moods when she longed to die.

Her friends directed her thoughts to charity. On the one hand, she saw poverty which was real and repulsive, and a sham poverty even more repulsive and pitiable; on the other, she saw the terrible indifference of the lady patronesses who came in carriages and gowns worth thousands. Life became to her more and more unbearable. She yearned for something real, for life itself — not this playing at living, not this skimming life of its cream. Of real life there was none. The best of her memories was her love for the little cadet Koko. That had been a good, honest, straightforward impulse, and now there was nothing like it. There could not be. She grew more and more depressed, and in this gloomy mood she

went to visit an aunt in Finland. The fresh scenery and surroundings, the people strangely different to her own, appealed to her at any rate as a new experience.

How and when it all began she could not clearly remember. Her aunt had another guest, a Swede. He talked of his work, his people, the latest Swedish novel. Somehow, she herself did not know how that terrible fascination of glances and smiles began, the meaning of which cannot be put into words.

These smiles and glances seemed to reveal to each, not only the soul of the other, but some vital and universal mystery. Every word they spoke was invested by these smiles with a profound and wonderful significance. Music, too, when they were listening together, or when they sang duets, became full of the same deep meaning. So, also, the words in the books they read aloud. Sometimes they would argue, but the moment their eyes met, or a smile flashed between them, the discussion remained far behind. They soared beyond it to some higher plane consecrated to themselves.

How it had come about, how and when the devil, who had seized hold of them both, first appeared behind these smiles and glances, she could not say. But, when terror first seized her,

the invisible threads that bound them were already so interwoven that she had no power to tear herself free. She could only count on him and on his honour. She hoped that he would not make use of his power; yet all the while she vaguely desired it.

Her weakness was the greater, because she had nothing to support her in the struggle. She was weary of society life and she had no affection for her mother. Her father, so she thought, had cast her away from him, and she longed passionately to live and to have done with play. Love, the perfect love of a woman for a man, held the promise of life for her. Her strong, passionate nature, too, was dragging her thither. In the tall, strong figure of this man, with his fair hair and light upturned moustache, under which shone a smile attractive and compelling, she saw the promise of that life for which she longed. And then the smiles and glances, the hope of something so incredibly beautiful, led, as they were bound to lead, to that which she feared but unconsciously awaited.

Suddenly all that was beautiful, joyous, spiritual, and full of promise for the future, became animal and sordid, sad and despairing.

She looked into his eyes and tried to smile, pretending that she feared nothing, that every-

thing was as it should be; but deep down in her soul she knew it was all over. She understood that she had not found in him what she had sought; that which she had once known in herself and in Koko. She told him that he must write to her father asking her hand in marriage. This he promised to do; but when she met him next he said it was impossible for him to write just then. She saw something vague and furtive in his eyes, and her distrust of him grew. The following day he wrote to her, telling her that he was already married, though his wife had left him long since; that he knew she would despise him for the wrong he had done her, and implored her forgiveness. She made him come to see her. She said she loved him; that she felt herself bound to him for ever whether he was married or not, and would never leave him. The next time they met he told her that he and his parents were so poor that he could only offer her the meanest existence. She answered that she needed nothing, and was ready to go with him at once wherever he wished. He endeavoured to dissuade her, advising her to wait; and so she waited. But to live on with this secret, with occasional meetings, and merely corresponding with him, all hidden from her family, was agonising, and she insisted again that he must take her away. At first, when she returned to St.

Petersburg, he wrote promising to come, and then letters ceased and she knew no more of him.

She tried to lead her old life, but it was impossible. She fell ill, and the efforts of the doctors were unavailing; in her hopelessness she resolved to kill herself. But how was she to do this, so that her death might seem natural? She really desired to take her life, and imagined that she had irrevocably decided on the step. So, obtaining some poison, she poured it into a glass, and in another instant would have drunk it, had not her sister's little son of five at that very moment run in to show her a toy his grandmother had given him. She caressed the child, and, suddenly stopping short, burst into tears.

The thought overpowered her that she, too, might have been a mother had he not been married, and this vision of motherhood made her look into her own soul for the first time. She began to think not of what others would say of her, but of her own life. To kill oneself because of what the world might say was easy; but the moment she saw her own life dissociated from the world, to take that life was out of the question. She threw away the poison, and ceased to think of suicide.

Then her life within began. It was real life, and despite the torture of it, had the possibility

been given her, she would not have turned back from it. She began to pray, but there was no comfort in prayer; and her suffering was less for herself than for her father, whose grief she foresaw and understood.

Thus months dragged along, and then something happened which entirely transformed her life. One day, when she was at work upon a quilt, she suddenly experienced a strange sensation. No — it seemed impossible. Motionless she sat with her work in hand. Was it possible that this was *It*. Forgetting everything, his baseness and deceit, her mother's querulousness, and her father's sorrow, she smiled. She shuddered at the recollection that she was on the point of killing it, together with herself.

She now directed all her thoughts to getting away — somewhere where she could bear her child — and become a miserable, pitiful mother, but a mother withal. Somehow she planned and arranged it all, leaving her home and settling in a distant provincial town, where no one could find her, and where she thought she would be far from her people. But, unfortunately, her father's brother received an appointment there, a thing she could not possibly foresee. For four months she had been living in the house of a midwife — one Maria Ivanovna; and, on learning that her uncle

had come to the town, she was preparing to fly to a still remoter hiding-place.

III

MICHAEL IVANOVICH awoke early next morning. He entered his brother's study, and handed him the cheque, filled in for a sum which he asked him to pay in monthly instalments to his daughter. He inquired when the express left for St. Petersburg. The train left at seven in the evening, giving him time for an early dinner before leaving. He breakfasted with his sister-in-law, who refrained from mentioning the subject which was so painful to him, but only looked at him timidly; and after breakfast he went out for his regular morning walk.

Alexandra Dmitrievna followed him into the hall.

"Go into the public gardens, Michael — it is very charming there, and quite near to Everything," said she, meeting his sombre looks with a pathetic glance.

Michael Ivanovich followed her advice and went to the public gardens, which were so near to Everything, and meditated with annoyance on the stupidity, the obstinacy, and heartlessness of women.

"She is not in the very least sorry for me," he thought of his sister-in-law. "She cannot even understand my sorrow. And what of her?" He was thinking of his daughter. "She knows what all this means to me — the torture. What a blow in one's old age! My days will be shortened by it! But I'd rather have it over than endure this agony. And all that '*pour les beaux yeux d'un chenapan*' — oh!" he moaned; and a wave of hatred and fury arose in him as he thought of what would be said in the town when every one knew. (And no doubt every one knew already.) Such a feeling of rage possessed him that he would have liked to beat it into her head, and make her understand what she had done. These women never understand. "It is quite near Everything," suddenly came to his mind, and getting out his notebook, he found her address. Vera Ivanovna Silvestrova, Kukonskaya Street, Abromov's house. She was living under this name. He left the gardens and called a cab.

"Whom do you wish to see, sir?" asked the midwife, Maria Ivanovna, when he stepped on the narrow landing of the steep, stuffy staircase.

"Does Madame Silvestrova live here?"

"Vera Ivanovna? Yes; please come in. She has gone out; she's gone to the shop round the corner. But she'll be back in a minute."

Michael Ivanovich followed the stout figure of Maria Ivanovna into a tiny parlour, and from the next room came the screams of a baby, sounding cross and peevish, which filled him with disgust. They cut him like a knife.

Maria Ivanovna apologised, and went into the room, and he could hear her soothing the child. The child became quiet, and she returned.

"That is her baby; she'll be back in a minute. You are a friend of hers, I suppose?"

"Yes — a friend — but I think I had better come back later on," said Michael Ivanovich, preparing to go. It was too unbearable, this preparation to meet her, and any explanation seemed impossible.

He had just turned to leave, when he heard quick, light steps on the stairs, and he recognised Lisa's voice.

"Maria Ivanovna — has he been crying while I've been gone — I was —"

Then she saw her father. The parcel she was carrying fell from her hands.

"Father!" she cried, and stopped in the doorway, white and trembling.

He remained motionless, staring at her. She had grown so thin. Her eyes were larger, her nose sharper, her hands worn and bony. He neither knew what to do, nor what to say. He

forgot all his grief about his dishonour. He only felt sorrow, infinite sorrow for her; sorrow for her thinness, and for her miserable rough clothing; and most of all, for her pitiful face and imploring eyes.

"Father — forgive," she said, moving towards him.

"Forgive — forgive me," he murmured; and he began to sob like a child, kissing her face and hands, and wetting them with his tears.

In his pity for her he understood himself. And when he saw himself as he was, he realised how he had wronged her, how guilty he had been in his pride, in his coldness, even in his anger towards her. He was glad that it was he who was guilty, and that he had nothing to forgive, but that he himself needed forgiveness. She took him to her tiny room, and told him how she lived; but she did not show him the child, nor did she mention the past, knowing how painful it would be to him.

He told her that she must live differently.

"Yes; if I could only live in the country," said she.

"We will talk it over," he said. Suddenly the child began to wail and to scream. She opened her eyes very wide; and, not taking them from her father's face, remained hesitating and motionless.

"Well — I suppose you must feed him," said Michael Ivanovich, and frowned with the obvious effort.

She got up, and suddenly the wild idea seized her to show him whom she loved so deeply the thing she now loved best of all in the world. But first she looked at her father's face. Would he be angry or not? His face revealed no anger, only suffering.

"Yes, go, go," said he; "God bless you. Yes. I'll come again to-morrow, and we will decide. Good-bye, my darling — good-bye." Again he found it hard to swallow the lump in his throat.

When Michael Ivanovich returned to his brother's house, Alexandra Dmitrievna immediately rushed to him.

"Well?"

"Well? Nothing."

"Have you seen?" she asked, guessing from his expression that something had happened.

"Yes," he answered shortly, and began to cry. "I'm getting old and stupid," said he, mastering his emotion.

"No; you are growing wise — very wise."

THERE ARE NO GUILTY PEOPLE

THERE ARE NO GUILTY PEOPLE

I

MINE is a strange and wonderful lot! The chances are that there is not a single wretched beggar suffering under the luxury and oppression of the rich who feels anything like as keenly as I do either the injustice, the cruelty, and the horror of their oppression of and contempt for the poor; or the grinding humiliation and misery which befall the great majority of the workers, the real producers of all that makes life possible. I have felt this for a long time, and as the years have passed by the feeling has grown and grown, until recently it reached its climax. Although I feel all this so vividly, I still live on amid the depravity and sins of rich society; and I cannot leave it, because I have neither the knowledge nor the strength to do so. I cannot. I do not know how to change my life so that my physical needs — food, sleep, clothing, my going to and fro — may be satisfied without a sense of shame and wrongdoing in the position which I fill.

There was a time when I tried to change my position, which was not in harmony with my conscience; but the conditions created by the past, by my family and its claims upon me, were so complicated that they would not let me out of their grasp, or rather, I did not know how to free myself. I had not the strength. Now that I am over eighty and have become feeble, I have given up trying to free myself; and, strange to say, as my feebleness increases I realise more and more strongly the wrongfulness of my position, and it grows more and more intolerable to me.

It has occurred to me that I do not occupy this position for nothing: that Providence intended that I should lay bare the truth of my feelings, so that I might atone for all that causes my suffering, and might perhaps open the eyes of those — or at least of some of those — who are still blind to what I see so clearly, and thus might lighten the burden of that vast majority who, under existing conditions, are subjected to bodily and spiritual suffering by those who deceive them and also deceive themselves. Indeed, it may be that the position which I occupy gives me special facilities for revealing the artificial and criminal relations which exist between men — for telling the whole truth in regard to that position without confusing the issue by attempting to vindicate myself, and

without rousing the envy of the rich and feelings of oppression in the hearts of the poor and down-trodden. I am so placed that I not only have no desire to vindicate myself; but, on the contrary, I find it necessary to make an effort lest I should exaggerate the wickedness of the great among whom I live, of whose society I am ashamed, whose attitude towards their fellow-men I detest with my whole soul, though I find it impossible to separate my lot from theirs. But I must also avoid the error of those democrats and others who, in defending the oppressed and the enslaved, do not see their failings and mistakes, and who do not make sufficient allowance for the difficulties created, the mistakes inherited from the past, which in a degree lessens the responsibility of the upper classes.

Free from desire for self-vindication, free from fear of an emancipated people, free from that envy and hatred which the oppressed feel for their oppressors, I am in the best possible position to see the truth and to tell it. Perhaps that is why Providence placed me in such a position. I will do my best to turn it to account.

II

Alexander Ivanovich Volgin, a bachelor and a clerk in a Moscow bank at a salary of eight thousand roubles a year, a man much respected in his own set, was staying in a country-house. His host was a wealthy landowner, owning some twenty-five hundred acres, and had married his guest's cousin. Volgin, tired after an evening spent in playing vint * for small stakes with members of the family, went to his room and placed his watch, silver cigarette-case, pocket-book, big leather purse, and pocket-brush and comb on a small table covered with a white cloth, and then, taking off his coat, waistcoat, shirt, trousers, and underclothes, his silk socks and English boots, put on his nightshirt and dressing-gown. His watch pointed to midnight. Volgin smoked a cigarette, lay on his face for about five minutes reviewing the day's impressions; then, blowing out his candle, he turned over on his side and fell asleep about one o'clock, in spite of a good deal of restlessness. Awaking next morning at eight he put on his slippers and dressing-gown, and rang the bell.

The old butler, Stephen, the father of a

* A game of cards similar to auction bridge.

family and the grandfather of six grandchildren, who had served in that house for thirty years, entered the room hurriedly, with bent legs, carrying in the newly blackened boots which Volgin had taken off the night before, a well-brushed suit, and a clean shirt. The guest thanked him, and then asked what the weather was like (the blinds were drawn so that the sun should not prevent any one from sleeping till eleven o'clock if he were so inclined), and whether his hosts had slept well. He glanced at his watch — it was still early — and began to wash and dress. His water was ready, and everything on the washing-stand and dressing-table was ready for use and properly laid out — his soap, his tooth and hair brushes, his nail scissors and files. He washed his hands and face in a leisurely fashion, cleaned and manicured his nails, pushed back the skin with the towel, and sponged his stout white body from head to foot. Then he began to brush his hair. Standing in front of the mirror, he first brushed his curly beard, which was beginning to turn grey, with two English brushes, parting it down the middle. Then he combed his hair, which was already showing signs of getting thin, with a large tortoise-shell comb. Putting on his underlinen, his socks, his boots, his trousers — which were held up by elegant braces — and his waistcoat, he sat down

coatless in an easy chair to rest after dressing, lit a cigarette, and began to think where he should go for a walk that morning — to the park or to Littleports (what a funny name for a wood!). He thought he would go to Littleports. Then he must answer Simon Nicholaevich's letter; but there was time enough for that. Getting up with an air of resolution, he took out his watch. It was already five minutes to nine. He put his watch into his waistcoat pocket, and his purse — with all that was left of the hundred and eighty roubles he had taken for his journey, and for the incidental expenses of his fortnight's stay with his cousin — and then he placed into his trouser pocket his cigarette-case and electric cigarette-lighter, and two clean handkerchiefs into his coat pockets, and went out of the room, leaving as usual the mess and confusion which he had made to be cleared up by Stephen, an old man of over fifty. Stephen expected Volgin to "remunerate" him, as he said, being so accustomed to the work that he did not feel the slightest repugnance for it. Glancing at a mirror, and feeling satisfied with his appearance, Volgin went into the dining-room.

There, thanks to the efforts of the housekeeper, the footman, and under-butler — the latter had risen at dawn in order to run home to sharpen his son's scythe — breakfast was ready. On a spotless white cloth stood a boiling, shiny, silver

samovar (at least it looked like silver), a coffee-pot, hot milk, cream, butter, and all sorts of fancy white bread and biscuits. The only persons at table were the second son of the house, his tutor (a student), and the secretary. The host, who was an active member of the Zemstvo and a great farmer, had already left the house, having gone at eight o'clock to attend to his work. Volgin, while drinking his coffee, talked to the student and the secretary about the weather, and yesterday's vint, and discussed Theodorite's peculiar behaviour the night before, as he had been very rude to his father without the slightest cause. Theodorite was the grown-up son of the house, and a ne'er-do-well. His name was Theodore, but some one had once called him Theodorite either as a joke or to tease him; and, as it seemed funny, the name stuck to him, although his doings were no longer in the least amusing. So it was now. He had been to the university, but left it in his second year, and joined a regiment of horse guards; but he gave that up also, and was now living in the country, doing nothing, finding fault, and feeling discontented with everything. Theodorite was still in bed: so were the other members of the household — Anna Mikhailovna, its mistress; her sister, the widow of a general; and a landscape painter who lived with the family.

Volgin took his panama hat from the hall table

(it had cost twenty roubles) and his cane with its carved ivory handle, and went out. Crossing the veranda, gay with flowers, he walked through the flower garden, in the centre of which was a raised round bed, with rings of red, white, and blue flowers, and the initials of the mistress of the house done in carpet bedding in the centre. Leaving the flower garden Volgin entered the avenue of lime trees, hundreds of years old, which peasant girls were tidying and sweeping with spades and brooms. The gardener was busy measuring, and a boy was bringing something in a cart. Passing these Volgin went into the park of at least a hundred and twenty-five acres, filled with fine old trees, and intersected by a network of well-kept walks. Smoking as he strolled Volgin took his favourite path past the summer-house into the fields beyond. It was pleasant in the park, but it was still nicer in the fields. On the right some women who were digging potatoes formed a mass of bright red and white colour; on the left were wheat fields, meadows, and grazing cattle; and in the foreground, slightly to the right, were the dark, dark oaks of Littleports. Volgin took a deep breath, and felt glad that he was alive, especially here in his cousin's home, where he was so thoroughly enjoying the rest from his work at the bank.

"Lucky people to live in the country," he thought. "True, what with his farming and his Zemstvo, the owner of the estate has very little peace even in the country, but that is his own lookout." Volgin shook his head, lit another cigarette, and, stepping out firmly with his powerful feet clad in his thick English boots, began to think of the heavy winter's work in the bank that was in front of him. "I shall be there every day from ten to two, sometimes even till five. And the board meetings. . . . And private interviews with clients. . . . Then the Duma. Whereas here. . . . It is delightful. It may be a little dull, but it is not for long." He smiled. After a stroll in Littleports he turned back, going straight across a fallow field which was being ploughed. A herd of cows, calves, sheep, and pigs, which belonged to the village community, was grazing there. The shortest way to the park was to pass through the herd. He frightened the sheep, which ran away one after another, and were followed by the pigs, of which two little ones stared solemnly at him. The shepherd boy called to the sheep and cracked his whip. "How far behind Europe we are," thought Volgin, recalling his frequent holidays abroad. "You would not find a single cow like that anywhere in Europe." Then, wanting to

find out where the path which branched off from the one he was on led to and who was the owner of the herd, he called to the boy.

“ Whose herd is it? ”

The boy was so filled with wonder, verging on terror, when he gazed at the hat, the well-brushed beard, and above all the gold-rimmed eyeglasses, that he could not reply at once. When Volgin repeated his question the boy pulled himself together, and said, “ Ours.” “ But whose is ‘ ours ’? ” said Volgin, shaking his head and smiling. The boy was wearing shoes of plaited birch bark, bands of linen round his legs, a dirty, unbleached shirt ragged at the shoulder, and a cap the peak of which had been torn.

“ Whose is ‘ ours ’? ”

“ The Pirogov village herd.”

“ How old are you? ”

“ I don’t know.”

“ Can you read? ”

“ No, I can’t.”

“ Didn’t you go to school? ”

“ Yes, I did.”

“ Couldn’t you learn to read? ”

“ No.”

“ Where does that path lead? ”

The boy told him, and Volgin went on towards the house, thinking how he would chaff

Nicholas Petrovich about the deplorable condition of the village schools in spite of all his efforts.

On approaching the house Volgin looked at his watch, and saw that it was already past eleven. He remembered that Nicholas Petrovich was going to drive to the nearest town, and that he had meant to give him a letter to post to Moscow; but the letter was not written. The letter was a very important one to a friend, asking him to bid for him for a picture of the Madonna which was to be offered for sale at an auction. As he reached the house he saw at the door four big, well-fed, well-groomed, thoroughbred horses harnessed to a carriage, the black lacquer of which glistened in the sun. The coachman was seated on the box in a kaftan, with a silver belt, and the horses were jingling their silver bells from time to time.

A bare-headed, bare-footed peasant in a ragged kaftan stood at the front door. He bowed. Volgin asked what he wanted.

"I have come to see Nicholas Petrovich."

"What about?"

"Because I am in distress — my horse has died."

Volgin began to question him. The peasant told him how he was situated. He had five chil-

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dren, and this had been his only horse. Now it was gone. He wept.

“What are you going to do?”

“To beg.” And he knelt down, and remained kneeling in spite of Volgin’s expostulations.

“What is your name?”

“Mitri Sudarikov,” answered the peasant, still kneeling.

Volgin took three roubles from his purse and gave them to the peasant, who showed his gratitude by touching the ground with his forehead, and then went into the house. His host was standing in the hall.

“Where is your letter?” he asked, approaching Volgin; “I am just off.”

“I’m awfully sorry, I’ll write it this minute, if you will let me. I forgot all about it. It’s so pleasant here that one can forget anything.”

“All right, but do be quick. The horses have already been standing a quarter of an hour, and the flies are biting viciously. Can you wait, Arseny?” he asked the coachman.

“Why not?” said the coachman, thinking to himself, “why do they order the horses when they aren’t ready? The rush the grooms and I had — just to stand here and feed the flies.”

“Directly, directly,” Volgin went towards his room, but turned back to ask Nicholas Petrovich about the begging peasant.

“Did you see him? — He’s a drunkard, but still he is to be pitied. Do be quick!”

Volgin got out his case, with all the requisites for writing, wrote the letter, made out a cheque for a hundred and eighty roubles, and, sealing down the envelope, took it to Nicholas Petrovich.

“Good-bye.”

Volgin read the newspapers till luncheon. He only read the Liberal papers: *The Russian Gazette*, *Speech*, sometimes *The Russian Word* — but he would not touch *The New Times*, to which his host subscribed.

While he was scanning at his ease the political news, the Tsar’s doings, the doings of President, and ministers and decisions in the Duma, and was just about to pass on to the general news, theatres, science, murders and cholera, he heard the luncheon bell ring.

Thanks to the efforts of upwards of ten human beings — counting laundresses, gardeners, cooks, kitchen-maids, butlers and footmen — the table was sumptuously laid for eight, with silver water-jugs, decanters, kvass, wine, mineral waters, cut glass, and fine table linen, while two men-servants were continually hurrying to and fro, bringing in and serving, and then clearing away the *hors d’œuvre* and the various hot and cold courses.

The hostess talked incessantly about every-

thing that she had been doing, thinking, and saying; and she evidently considered that everything that she thought, said, or did was perfect, and that it would please every one except those who were fools. Volgin felt and knew that everything she said was stupid, but it would never do to let it be seen, and so he kept up the conversation. Theodorite was glum and silent; the student occasionally exchanged a few words with the widow. Now and again there was a pause in the conversation, and then Theodorite interposed, and every one became miserably depressed. At such moments the hostess ordered some dish that had not been served, and the footman hurried off to the kitchen, or to the housekeeper, and hurried back again. Nobody felt inclined either to talk or to eat. But they all forced themselves to eat and to talk, and so luncheon went on.

The peasant who had been begging because his horse had died was named Mitri Sudarikov. He had spent the whole day before he went to the squire over his dead horse. First of all he went to the knacker, Sanin, who lived in a village near. The knacker was out, but he waited for him, and it was dinner-time when he had finished bargaining over the price of the skin. Then he borrowed a neighbour's horse to take his own to a field to be buried, as it is forbidden to bury dead

animals near a village. Adrian would not lend his horse because he was getting in his potatoes, but Stephen took pity on Mitri and gave way to his persuasion. He even lent a hand in lifting the dead horse into the cart. Mitri tore off the shoes from the forelegs and gave them to his wife. One was broken, but the other one was whole. While he was digging the grave with a spade which was very blunt, the knacker appeared and took off the skin; and the carcass was then thrown into the hole and covered up. Mitri felt tired, and went into Matrena's hut, where he drank half a bottle of vodka with Sanin to console himself. Then he went home, quarrelled with his wife, and lay down to sleep on the hay. He did not undress, but slept just as he was, with a ragged coat for a coverlet. His wife was in the hut with the girls — there were four of them, and the youngest was only five weeks old. Mitri woke up before dawn as usual. He groaned as the memory of the day before broke in upon him — how the horse had struggled and struggled, and then fallen down. Now there was no horse, and all he had was the price of the skin, four roubles and eighty kopeks. Getting up he arranged the linen bands on his legs, and went through the yard into the hut. His wife was putting straw into the stove with one hand, with

the other she was holding a baby girl to her breast, which was hanging out of her dirty chemise.

Mitri crossed himself three times, turning towards the corner in which the ikons hung, and repeated some utterly meaningless words, which he called prayers, to the Trinity and the Virgin, the Creed and our Father.

"Isn't there any water?"

"The girl's gone for it. I've got some tea. Will you go up to the squire?"

"Yes, I'd better." The smoke from the stove made him cough. He took a rag off the wooden bench and went into the porch. The girl had just come back with the water. Mitri filled his mouth with water from the pail and squirted it out on his hands, took some more in his mouth to wash his face, dried himself with the rag, then parted and smoothed his curly hair with his fingers and went out. A little girl of about ten, with nothing on but a dirty shirt, came towards him. "Good-morning, Uncle Mitri," she said; "you are to come and thrash." "All right, I'll come," replied Mitri. He understood that he was expected to return the help given the week before by Kumushkir, a man as poor as he was himself, when he was thrashing his own corn with a horse-driven machine.

"Tell them I'll come — I'll come at lunch time.

I've got to go to Ugrumi." Mitri went back to the hut, and changing his birch-bark shoes and the linen bands on his legs, started off to see the squire. After he had got three roubles from Volgin, and the same sum from Nicholas Petrovich, he returned to his house, gave the money to his wife, and went to his neighbour's. The thrashing machine was humming, and the driver was shouting. The lean horses were going slowly round him, straining at their traces. The driver was shouting to them in a monotone, "Now, there, my dears." Some women were unbinding sheaves, others were raking up the scattered straw and ears, and others again were gathering great armfuls of corn and handing them to the men to feed the machine. The work was in full swing. In the kitchen garden, which Mitri had to pass, a girl, clad only in a long shirt, was digging potatoes which she put into a basket.

"Where's your grandfather?" asked Mitri. "He's in the barn." Mitri went to the barn and set to work at once. The old man of eighty knew of Mitri's trouble. After greeting him, he gave him his place to feed the machine.

Mitri took off his ragged coat, laid it out of the way near the fence, and then began to work vigorously, raking the corn together and throwing it into the machine. The work went on without interruption until the dinner-hour. The cocks

had crowed two or three times, but no one paid any attention to them; not because the workers did not believe them, but because they were scarcely heard for the noise of the work and the talk about it. At last the whistle of the squire's steam thrasher sounded three miles away, and then the owner came into the barn. He was a straight old man of eighty. "It's time to stop," he said; "it's dinner-time." Those at work seemed to redouble their efforts. In a moment the straw was cleared away; the grain that had been thrashed was separated from the chaff and brought in, and then the workers went into the hut.

The hut was smoke-begrimed, as its stove had no chimney, but it had been tidied up, and benches stood round the table, making room for all those who had been working, of whom there were nine, not counting the owners. Bread, soup, boiled potatoes, and kvass were placed on the table.

An old one-armed beggar, with a bag slung over his shoulder, came in with a crutch during the meal.

"Peace be to this house. A good appetite to you. For Christ's sake give me something."

"God will give it to you," said the mistress, already an old woman, and the daughter-in-law of the master. "Don't be angry with us." An old man, who was still standing near the door, said, "Give him some bread, Martha. How can you?"

"I am only wondering whether we shall have enough." "Oh, it is wrong, Martha. God tells us to help the poor. Cut him a slice."

Martha obeyed. The beggar went away. The man in charge of the thrashing-machine got up, said grace, thanked his hosts, and went away to rest.

Mitri did not lie down, but ran to the shop to buy some tobacco. He was longing for a smoke. While he smoked he chatted to a man from Demensk, asking the price of cattle, as he saw that he would not be able to manage without selling a cow. When he returned to the others, they were already back at work again; and so it went on till the evening.

Among these downtrodden, duped, and defrauded men, who are becoming demoralised by overwork, and being gradually done to death by underfeeding; there are men living who consider themselves Christians; and others so enlightened that they feel no further need for Christianity or for any religion, so superior do they appear in their own esteem. And yet their hideous, lazy lives are supported by the degrading, excessive labour of these slaves, not to mention the labour of millions of other slaves, toiling in factories to produce samovars, silver, carriages, machines, and the like for their use. They live

among these horrors, seeing them and yet not seeing them, although often kind at heart — old men and women, young men and maidens, mothers and children — poor children who are being vitiated and trained into moral blindness.

Here is a bachelor grown old, the owner of thousands of acres, who has lived a life of idleness, greed, and over-indulgence, who reads *The New Times*, and is astonished that the government can be so unwise as to permit Jews to enter the university. There is his guest, formerly the governor of a province, now a senator with a big salary, who reads with satisfaction that a congress of lawyers has passed a resolution in favor of capital punishment. Their political enemy, N. P., reads a liberal paper, and cannot understand the blindness of the government in allowing the union of Russian men to exist.

Here is a kind, gentle mother of a little girl reading a story to her about Fox, a dog that lamed some rabbits. And here is this little girl. During her walks she sees other children, bare-footed, hungry, hunting for green apples that have fallen from the trees; and, so accustomed is she to the sight, that these children do not seem to her to be children such as she is, but only part of the usual surroundings — the familiar landscape.

Why is this?

THE YOUNG TSAR

THE YOUNG TSAR

THE young Tsar had just ascended the throne. For five weeks he had worked without ceasing, in the way that Tsars are accustomed to work. He had been attending to reports, signing papers, receiving ambassadors and high officials who came to be presented to him, and reviewing troops. He was tired, and as a traveller exhausted by heat and thirst longs for a draught of water and for rest, so he longed for a respite of just one day at least from receptions, from speeches, from parades — a few free hours to spend like an ordinary human being with his young, clever, and beautiful wife, to whom he had been married only a month before.

It was Christmas Eve. The young Tsar had arranged to have a complete rest that evening. The night before he had worked till very late at documents which his ministers of state had left for him to examine. In the morning he was present at the *Te Deum*, and then at a military service. In the afternoon he received official visitors; and later he had been obliged to listen

to the reports of three ministers of state, and had given his assent to many important matters. In his conference with the Minister of Finance he had agreed to an increase of duties on imported goods, which should in the future add many millions to the State revenues. Then he sanctioned the sale of brandy by the Crown in various parts of the country, and signed a decree permitting the sale of alcohol in villages having markets. This was also calculated to increase the principal revenue to the State, which was derived from the sale of spirits. He had also approved of the issuing of a new gold loan required for a financial negotiation. The Minister of Justice having reported on the complicated case of the succession of the Baron Snyders, the young Tsar confirmed the decision by his signature; and also approved the new rules relating to the application of Article 1830 of the penal code, providing for the punishment of tramps. In his conference with the Minister of the Interior he ratified the order concerning the collection of taxes in arrears, signed the order settling what measures should be taken in regard to the persecution of religious dissenters, and also one providing for the continuance of martial law in those provinces where it had already been established. With the Minister of War he arranged for the nomination of a new

Corps Commander for the raising of recruits, and for punishment of breach of discipline. These things kept him occupied till dinner-time, and even then his freedom was not complete. A number of high officials had been invited to dinner, and he was obliged to talk to them: not in the way he felt disposed to do, but according to what he was expected to say. At last the tiresome dinner was over, and the guests departed.

The young Tsar heaved a sigh of relief, stretched himself and retired to his apartments to take off his uniform with the decorations on it, and to don the jacket he used to wear before his accession to the throne. His young wife had also retired to take off her dinner-dress, remarking that she would join him presently.

When he had passed the row of footmen who were standing erect before him, and reached his room; when he had thrown off his heavy uniform and put on his jacket, the young Tsar felt glad to be free from work; and his heart was filled with a tender emotion which sprang from the consciousness of his freedom, of his joyous, robust young life, and of his love. He threw himself on the sofa, stretched out his legs upon it, leaned his head on his hand, fixed his gaze on the dull glass shade of the lamp, and then a sensation which he had not experienced since his childhood,—the pleasure of

going to sleep, and a drowsiness that was irresistible — suddenly came over him.

“My wife will be here presently and will find me asleep. No, I must not go to sleep,” he thought. He let his elbow drop down, laid his cheek in the palm of his hand, made himself comfortable, and was so utterly happy that he only felt a desire not to be aroused from this delightful state.

And then what happens to all of us every day happened to him — he fell asleep without knowing himself when or how. He passed from one state into another without his will having any share in it, without even desiring it, and without regretting the state out of which he had passed. He fell into a heavy sleep which was like death. How long he had slept he did not know, but he was suddenly aroused by the soft touch of a hand upon his shoulder.

“It is my darling, it is she,” he thought. “What a shame to have dozed off!”

But it was not she. Before his eyes, which were wide open and blinking at the light, she, that charming and beautiful creature whom he was expecting, did not stand, but *he* stood. Who *he* was the young Tsar did not know, but somehow it did not strike him that he was a stranger whom he had never seen before. It seemed as if he had

known him for a long time and was fond of him, and as if he trusted him as he would trust himself. He had expected his beloved wife, but in her stead that man whom he had never seen before had come. Yet to the young Tsar, who was far from feeling regret or astonishment, it seemed not only a most natural, but also a necessary thing to happen.

"Come!" said the stranger.

"Yes, let us go," said the young Tsar, not knowing where he was to go, but quite aware that he could not help submitting to the command of the stranger. "But how shall we go?" he asked.

"In this way."

The stranger laid his hand on the Tsar's head, and the Tsar for a moment lost consciousness. He could not tell whether he had been unconscious a long or a short time, but when he recovered his senses he found himself in a strange place. The first thing he was aware of was a strong and stifling smell of sewage. The place in which he stood was a broad passage lit by the red glow of two dim lamps. Running along one side of the passage was a thick wall with windows protected by iron gratings. On the other side were doors secured with locks. In the passage stood a soldier, leaning up against the wall, asleep.

Through the doors the young Tsar heard the muffled sound of living human beings: not of one alone, but of many. *He* was standing at the side of the young Tsar, and pressing his shoulder slightly with his soft hand, pushed him to the first door, unmindful of the sentry. The young Tsar felt he could not do otherwise than yield, and approached the door. To his amazement the sentry looked straight at him, evidently without seeing him, as he neither straightened himself up nor saluted, but yawned loudly and, lifting his hand, scratched the back of his neck. The door had a small hole, and in obedience to the *pressure of the hand that pushed him, the young Tsar approached a step nearer and put his eye to the small opening. Close to the door, the foul smell that stifled him was stronger, and the young Tsar hesitated to go nearer, but the hand pushed him on. He leaned forward, put his eye close to the opening, and suddenly ceased to perceive the odour. The sight he saw deadened his sense of smell. In a large room, about ten yards long and six yards wide, there walked unceasingly from one end to the other, six men in long grey coats, some in felt boots, some barefoot. There were over twenty men in all in the room, but in that first moment the young Tsar only saw those who were walking with quick, even, silent

steps. It was a horrid sight to watch the continual, quick, aimless movements of the men who passed and overtook each other, turning sharply when they reached the wall, never looking at one another, and evidently concentrated each on his own thoughts. The young Tsar had observed a similar sight one day when he was watching a tiger in a menagerie pacing rapidly with noiseless tread from one end of his cage to the other, waving its tail, silently turning when it reached the bars, and looking at nobody. Of these men one, apparently a young peasant, with curly hair, would have been handsome were it not for the unnatural pallor of his face, and the concentrated, wicked, scarcely human, look in his eyes. Another was a Jew, hairy and gloomy. The third was a lean old man, bald, with a beard that had been shaven and had since grown like bristles. The fourth was extraordinarily heavily built, with well-developed muscles, a low receding forehead and a flat nose. The fifth was hardly more than a boy, long, thin, obviously consumptive. The sixth was small and dark, with nervous, convulsive movements. He walked as if he were skipping, and muttered continuously to himself. They were all walking rapidly backwards and forwards past the hole through which the young Tsar was looking. He watched their faces and their gait with

keen interest. Having examined them closely, he presently became aware of a number of other men at the back of the room, standing round, or lying on the shelf that served as a bed. Standing close to the door he also saw the pail which caused such an unbearable stench. On the shelf about ten men, entirely covered with their cloaks, were sleeping. A red-haired man with a huge beard was sitting sideways on the shelf, with his shirt off. He was examining it, lifting it up to the light, and evidently catching the vermin on it. Another man, aged and white as snow, stood with his profile turned towards the door. He was praying, crossing himself, and bowing low, apparently so absorbed in his devotions as to be oblivious of all around him.

"I see — this is a prison," thought the young Tsar. "They certainly deserve pity. It is a dreadful life. But it cannot be helped. It is their own fault."

But this thought had hardly come into his head before *he*, who was his guide, replied to it.

"They are all here under lock and key by your order. They have all been sentenced in your name. But far from meriting their present condition which is due to your human judgment, the greater part of them are far better than you or

those who were their judges and who keep them here. This one" — he pointed to the handsome, curly-headed fellow — "is a murderer. I do not consider him more guilty than those who kill in war or in duelling, and are rewarded for their deeds. He had neither education nor moral guidance, and his life had been cast among thieves and drunkards. This lessens his guilt, but he has done wrong, nevertheless, in being a murderer. He killed a merchant, to rob him. The other man, the Jew, is a thief, one of a gang of thieves. That uncommonly strong fellow is a horse-stealer, and guilty also, but compared with others not as culpable. Look!" — and suddenly the young Tsar found himself in an open field on a vast frontier. On the right were potato fields; the plants had been rooted out, and were lying in heaps, blackened by the frost; in alternate streaks were rows of winter corn. In the distance a little village with its tiled roofs was visible; on the left were fields of winter corn, and fields of stubble. No one was to be seen on any side, save a black human figure in front at the border-line, a gun slung on his back, and at his feet a dog. On the spot where the young Tsar stood, sitting beside him, almost at his feet, was a young Russian soldier with a green band on his cap, and with his rifle slung over his shoulders, who was rolling up

a paper to make a cigarette. The soldier was obviously unaware of the presence of the young Tsar and his companion, and had not heard them. He did now turn round when the Tsar, who was standing directly over the soldier, asked, "Where are we?" "On the Prussian frontier," his guide answered. Suddenly, far away in front of them, a shot was fired. The soldier jumped to his feet, and seeing two men running, bent low to the ground, hastily put his tobacco into his pocket, and ran after one of them. "Stop, or I'll shoot!" cried the soldier. The fugitive, without stopping, turned his head and called out something evidently abusive or blasphemous.

"Damn you!" shouted the soldier, who put one foot a little forward and stopped, after which, bending his head over his rifle, and raising his right hand, he rapidly adjusted something, took aim, and, pointing the gun in the direction of the fugitive, probably fired, although no sound was heard. "Smokeless powder, no doubt," thought the young Tsar, and looking after the fleeing man saw him take a few hurried steps, and bending lower and lower, fall to the ground and crawl on his hands and knees. At last he remained lying and did not move. The other fugitive, who was ahead of him, turned round and ran back to the man who was lying on the ground. He

did something for him and then resumed his flight.

"What does all this mean?" asked the Tsar.

"These are the guards on the frontier, enforcing the revenue laws. That man was killed to protect the revenues of the State."

"Has he actually been killed?"

The guide again laid his hand upon the head of the young Tsar, and again the Tsar lost consciousness. When he had recovered his senses he found himself in a small room — the customs office. The dead body of a man, with a thin grizzled beard, an aquiline nose, and big eyes with the eyelids closed, was lying on the floor. His arms were thrown asunder, his feet bare, and his thick, dirty toes were turned up at right angles and stuck out straight. He had a wound in his side, and on his ragged cloth jacket, as well as on his blue shirt, were stains of clotted blood, which had turned black save for a few red spots here and there. A woman stood close to the wall, so wrapped up in shawls that her face could scarcely be seen. Motionless she gazed at the aquiline nose, the upturned feet, and the protruding eyeballs; sobbing and sighing, and drying her tears at long, regular intervals. A pretty girl of thirteen was standing at her mother's side, with her eyes and mouth wide open. A boy of eight clung to

his mother's skirt, and looked intensely at his dead father without blinking.

From a door near them an official, an officer, a doctor, and a clerk with documents, entered. After them came a soldier, the one who had shot the man. He stepped briskly along behind his superiors, but the instant he saw the corpse he went suddenly pale, and quivered; and dropping his head stood still. When the official asked him whether that was the man who was escaping across the frontier, and at whom he had fired, he was unable to answer. His lips trembled, and his face twitched. "The s—s—s—" he began, but could not get out the words which he wanted to say. "The same, your excellency." The officials looked at each other and wrote something down.

"You see the beneficial results of that same system!"

In a room of sumptuous vulgarity two men sat drinking wine. One of them was old and grey, the other a young Jew. The young Jew was holding a roll of bank-notes in his hand, and was bargaining with the old man. He was buying smuggled goods.

"You've got 'em cheap," he said, smiling.

"Yes — but the risk —"

"This is indeed terrible," said the young Tsar;

"but it cannot be avoided. Such proceedings are necessary."

His companion made no response, saying merely, "Let us move on," and laid his hand again on the head of the Tsar. When the Tsar recovered consciousness, he was standing in a small room lit by a shaded lamp. A woman was sitting at the table sewing. A boy of eight was bending over the table, drawing, with his feet doubled up under him in the armchair. A student was reading aloud. The father and daughter of the family entered the room noisily.

"You signed the order concerning the sale of spirits," said the guide to the Tsar.

"Well?" said the woman.

"He's not likely to live."

"What's the matter with him?"

"They've kept him drunk all the time."

"It's not possible!" exclaimed the wife.

"It's true. And the boy's only nine years old, that Vania Moroshkine."

"What did you do to try to save him?" asked the wife.

"I tried everything that could be done. I gave him an emetic and put a mustard-plaster on him. He has every symptom of delirium tremens."

"It's no wonder — the whole family are drunkards. Annisia is only a little better than the rest,

and even she is generally more or less drunk," said the daughter.

"And what about your temperance society?" the student asked his sister.

"What can we do when they are given every opportunity of drinking? Father tried to have the public-house shut up, but the law is against him. And, besides, when I was trying to convince Vasily Ermiline that it was disgraceful to keep a public-house and ruin the people with drink, he answered very haughtily, and indeed got the better of me before the crowd: 'But I have a license with the Imperial eagle on it. If there was anything wrong in my business, the Tsar wouldn't have issued a decree authorising it.' Isn't it terrible? The whole village has been drunk for the last three days. And as for feast-days, it is simply horrible to think of! It has been proved conclusively that alcohol does no good in any case, but invariably does harm, and it has been demonstrated to be an absolute poison. Then, ninety-nine per cent. of the crimes in the world are committed through its influence. We all know how the standard of morality and the general welfare improved at once in all the countries where drinking has been suppressed — like Sweden and Finland, and we know that it can be suppressed by exercising a moral influence over

the masses. But in our country the class which could exert that influence — the Government, the Tsar and his officials — simply encourage drink. Their main revenues are drawn from the continual drunkenness of the people. They drink themselves — they are always drinking the health of somebody: ‘Gentlemen, the Regiment!’ The preachers drink, the bishops drink —”

Again the guide touched the head of the young Tsar, who again lost consciousness. This time he found himself in a peasant’s cottage. The peasant — a man of forty, with red face and blood-shot eyes — was furiously striking the face of an old man, who tried in vain to protect himself from the blows. The younger peasant seized the beard of the old man and held it fast.

“For shame! To strike your father — !”

“I don’t care, I’ll kill him! Let them send me to Siberia, I don’t care!”

The women were screaming. Drunken officials rushed into the cottage and separated father and son. The father had an arm broken and the son’s beard was torn out. In the doorway a drunken girl was making violent love to an old besotted peasant.

“They are beasts!” said the young Tsar.

Another touch of his guide’s hand and the young Tsar awoke in a new place. It was the

office of the justice of the peace. A fat, bald-headed man, with a double chin and a chain round his neck, had just risen from his seat, and was reading the sentence in a loud voice, while a crowd of peasants stood behind the grating. There was a woman in rags in the crowd who did not rise. The guard gave her a push.

"Asleep! I tell you to stand up!" The woman rose.

"According to the decree of his Imperial Majesty—" the judge began reading the sentence. The case concerned that very woman. She had taken away half a bundle of oats as she was passing the thrashing-floor of a landowner. The justice of the peace sentenced her to two months' imprisonment. The landowner whose oats had been stolen was among the audience. When the judge adjourned the court the landowner approached, and shook hands, and the judge entered into conversation with him. The next case was about a stolen samovar. Then there was a trial about some timber which had been cut, to the detriment of the landowner. Some peasants were being tried for having assaulted the constable of the district.

When the young Tsar again lost consciousness, he awoke to find himself in the middle of a vil-

lage, where he saw hungry, half-frozen children and the wife of the man who had assaulted the constable broken down from overwork.

Then came a new scene. In Siberia, a tramp is being flogged with the lash, the direct result of an order issued by the Minister of Justice. Again oblivion, and another scene. The family of a Jewish watchmaker is evicted for being too poor. The children are crying, and the Jew, Isaaks, is greatly distressed. At last they come to an arrangement, and he is allowed to stay on in the lodgings.

The chief of police takes a bribe. The governor of the province also secretly accepts a bribe. Taxes are being collected. In the village, while a cow is sold for payment, the police inspector is bribed by a factory owner, who thus escapes taxes altogether. And again a village court scene, and a sentence carried into execution — the lash!

“Ilia Vasilievich, could you not spare me that?”

“No.”

The peasant burst into tears. “Well, of course, Christ suffered, and He bids us suffer too.”

Then other scenes. The Stundists — a sect — being broken up and dispersed; the clergy re-

fusing first to marry, then to bury a Protestant. Orders given concerning the passage of the Imperial railway train. Soldiers kept sitting in the mud — cold, hungry, and cursing. Decrees issued relating to the educational institutions of the Empress Mary Department. Corruption rampant in the foundling homes. An undeserved monument. Thieving among the clergy. The reinforcement of the political police. A woman being searched. A prison for convicts who are sentenced to be deported. A man being hanged for murdering a shop assistant.

Then the result of military discipline: soldiers wearing uniform and scoffing at it. A gipsy encampment. The son of a millionaire exempted from military duty, while the only support of a large family is forced to serve. The university: a teacher relieved of military service, while the most gifted musicians are compelled to perform it. Soldiers and their debauchery — and the spreading of disease.

Then a soldier who has made an attempt to desert. He is being tried. Another is on trial for striking an officer who has insulted his mother. He is put to death. Others, again, are tried for having refused to shoot. The runaway soldier sent to a disciplinary battalion and flogged to death. Another, who is guiltless, flogged, and

his wounds sprinkled with salt till he dies. One of the superior officers stealing money belonging to the soldiers. Nothing but drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, and arrogance on the part of the authorities.

What is the general condition of the people: the children are half-starving and degenerate; the houses are full of vermin; an everlasting dull round of labour, of submission, and of sadness. On the other hand: ministers, governors of provinces, covetous, ambitious, full of vanity, and anxious to inspire fear.

“But where are men with human feelings?”

“I will show you where they are.”

Here is the cell of a woman in solitary confinement at Schlusselfurg. She is going mad. Here is another woman — a girl — indisposed, violated by soldiers. A man in exile, alone, embittered, half-dead. A prison for convicts condemned to hard labour, and women flogged. They are many.

Tens of thousands of the best people. Some shut up in prisons, others ruined by false education, by the vain desire to bring them up as we wish. But not succeeding in this, whatever might have been is ruined as well, for it is made impossible. It is as if we were trying to make buckwheat out of corn sprouts by splitting the ears.

One may spoil the corn, but one could never change it to buckwheat. Thus all the youth of the world, the entire younger generation, is being ruined.

But woe to those who destroy one of these little ones, woe to you if you destroy even one of them. On your soul, however, are hosts of them, who have been ruined in your name, all of those over whom your power extends.

"But what can I do?" exclaimed the Tsar in despair. "I do not wish to torture, to flog, to corrupt, to kill any one! I only want the welfare of all. Just as I yearn for happiness myself, so I want the world to be happy as well. Am I actually responsible for everything that is done in my name? What can I do? What am I to do to rid myself of such a responsibility? What can I do? I do not admit that the responsibility for all this is mine. If I felt myself responsible for one-hundredth part of it, I would shoot myself on the spot. It would not be possible to live if that were true. But how can I put an end to all this evil? It is bound up with the very existence of the State. I am the head of the State! What am I to do? Kill myself? Or abdicate? But that would mean renouncing my duty. O God, O God, God, help me!" He burst into tears and awoke.

"How glad I am that it was only a dream,"

was his first thought. But when he began to recollect what he had seen in his dream, and to compare it with actuality, he realised that the problem propounded to him in dream remained just as important and as insoluble now that he was awake. For the first time the young Tsar became aware of the heavy responsibility weighing on him, and was aghast. His thoughts no longer turned to the young Queen and to the happiness he had anticipated for that evening, but became centred on the unanswerable question which hung over him: "What was to be done?"

In a state of great agitation he arose and went into the next room. An old courtier, a co-worker and friend of his father's, was standing there in the middle of the room in conversation with the young Queen, who was on her way to join her husband. The young Tsar approached them, and addressing his conversation principally to the old courtier, told him what he had seen in his dream and what doubts the dream had left in his mind.

"That is a noble idea. It proves the rare nobility of your spirit," said the old man. "But forgive me for speaking frankly — you are too kind to be an emperor, and you exaggerate your responsibility. In the first place, the state of things is not as you imagine it to be. The people are not poor. They are well-to-do. Those who

are poor are poor through their own fault. Only the guilty are punished, and if an unavoidable mistake does sometimes occur, it is like a thunderbolt — an accident, or the will of God. You have but one responsibility: to fulfil your task courageously and to retain the power that is given to you. You wish the best for your people and God sees that. As for the errors which you have committed unwittingly, you can pray for forgiveness, and God will guide you and pardon you. All the more because you have done nothing that demands forgiveness, and there never have been and never will be men possessed of such extraordinary qualities as you and your father. Therefore all we implore you to do is to live, and to reward our endless devotion and love with your favour, and every one, save scoundrels who deserve no happiness, will be happy."

"What do you think about that?" the young Tsar asked his wife.

"I have a different opinion," said the clever young woman, who had been brought up in a free country. "I am glad you had that dream, and I agree with you that there are grave responsibilities resting upon you. I have often thought about it with great anxiety, and I think there is a simple means of casting off a part of the responsibility

you are unable to bear, if not all of it. A large proportion of the power which is too heavy for you, you should delegate to the people, to its representatives, reserving for yourself only the supreme control, that is, the general direction of the affairs of State."

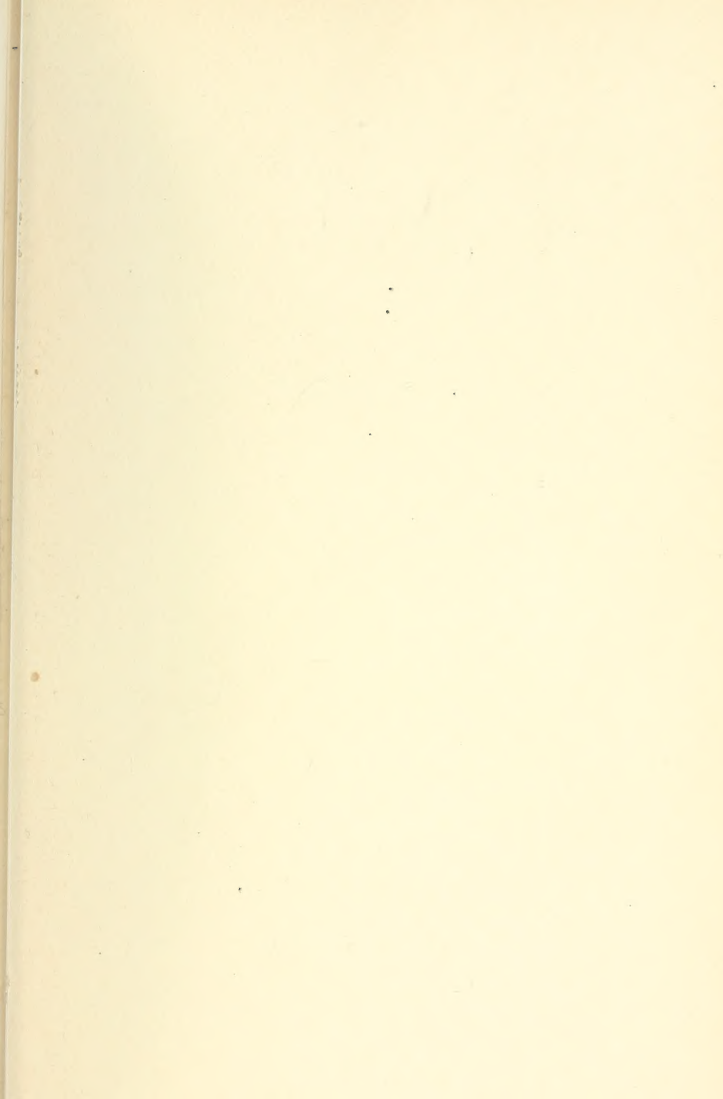
The Queen had hardly ceased to expound her views, when the old courtier began eagerly to refute her arguments, and they started a polite but very heated discussion.

For a time the young Tsar followed their arguments, but presently he ceased to be aware of what they said, listening only to the voice of him who had been his guide in the dream, and who was now speaking audibly in his heart.

"You are not only the Tsar," said the voice, "but more. You are a human being, who only yesterday came into this world, and will perchance to-morrow depart out of it. Apart from your duties as a Tsar, of which that old man is now speaking, you have more immediate duties not by any means to be disregarded; human duties, not the duties of a Tsar towards his subjects, which are only accidental, but an eternal duty, the duty of a man in his relation to God, the duty toward your own soul, which is to save it, and also, to serve God in establishing his kingdom on earth.

You are not to be guarded in your actions either by what has been or what will be, but only by what it is your own duty to do.

He opened his eyes — his wife was awakening him. Which of the three courses the young Tsar chose, will be told in fifty years.



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